CYCLE GUIDE

THE BEST OF 1984

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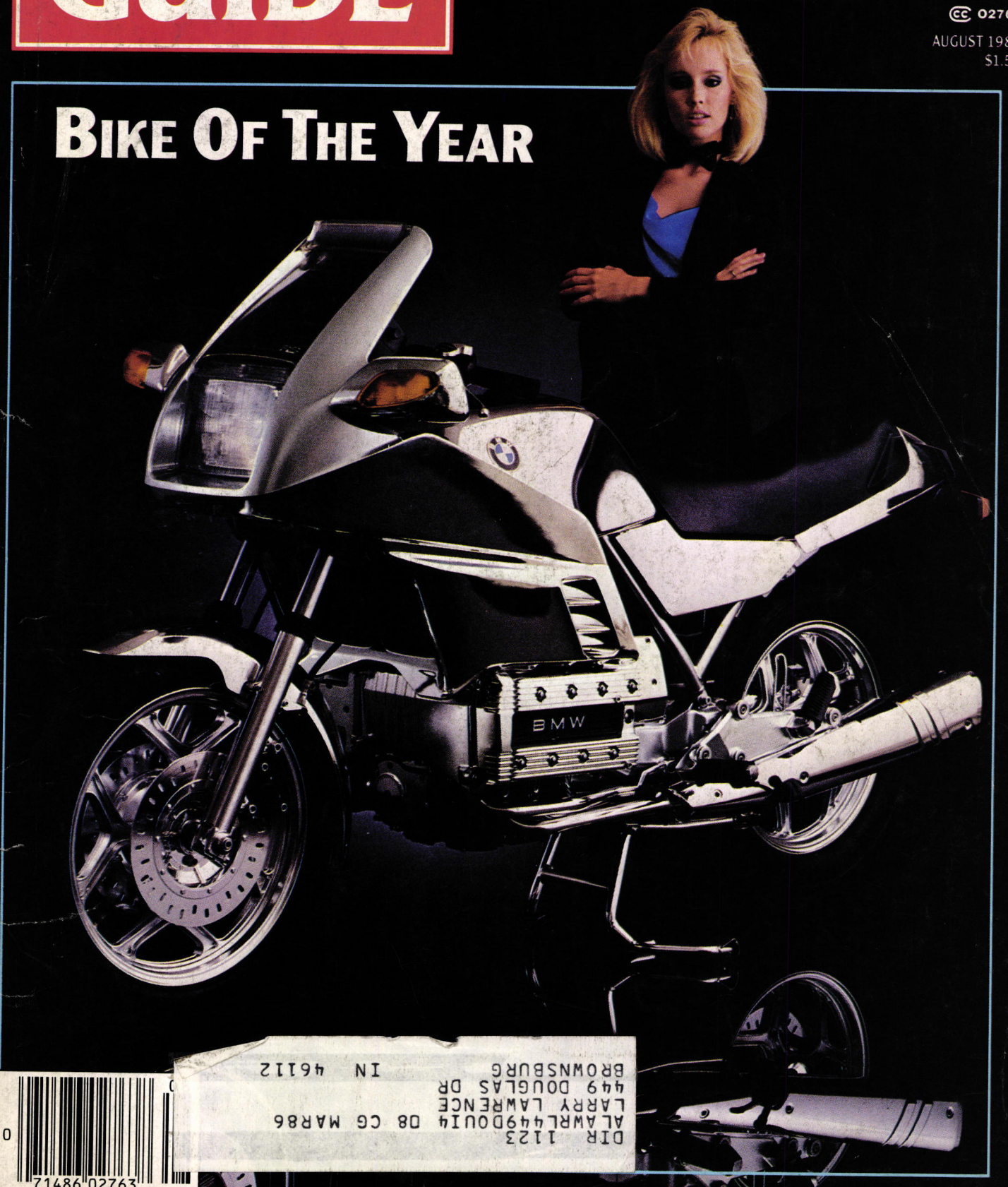

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QUOTE:
"Oh my God, they chromed another one." —**Pg. 11**

ON THE COVER:
Standing before you is 1984's shining achievement, a glistening work of art that reflects brilliant execution as well as polished maturity. Chris Eastman watched as this radiant creation developed into the year's Silver Bullet Award winner.

CYCLE GUIDE

Publisher
Peter S. Nicolaysen

Editor
Larry Works

Art Director
Gilbert Luna

Executive Editor
Charles Everitt

Managing Editor
Jim Miller

Associate Editor
Ron Lawson

Graphic Director
David Clark

Editorial Assistant
Marc Cook

Sport Editor
Dain Gingerelli

News Editor
Joe Kress

Technical Advisor
David Dewhurst

Washington Desk
Steven L. Thompson

Foreign Correspondent
L.J.K. Setright

Contributors
Patrick Behar, Rich Chenet, Chris Eastman, Torrey Heeb, Vic Huber, Doug Jackson, Vince McMahon, T.J. Rafferty, Tom Riles, Joe Saputo, Mark Wagner, George Wegner

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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am Sonic MX-'83	January '83	Motocross	Four-stroke	11.6/12.1	272	28.0/4.24	5
Honda ATC200X-'83	August '83	ATV	Four-stroke	7.2/6.2	285	N/A	5
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.0	311	N/A	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	216	26.7/4.13	5
Honda CR500R-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	12.0/12.5	228	27.2/4.25	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR350R-'83	June '83	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.9/10.4	253	26.0/3.94	6
Honda XR500R-'83	October '83	Desert	Four-stroke	11.0/12.2	278	25.5/3.94	5
Husqvarna 250CR-'83	January '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.7	227	30.0/5.51	6
Husqvarna 400WR-'84	July '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.0/11.2	242	28.5/5.16	6
Husqvarna 500CR-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.8	240	30.0/5.51	4
Husqvarna 500XC-'83	October '83	Desert	Two-stroke	11.7/12.8	245	30.0/5.98	6
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KDX200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.9	214	28.0/4.76	6
Kawasaki KDX250-'83	November '83	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	232	29.0/5.00	6
Kawasaki KX125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.2	195	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KX500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/11.9	232	29.0/4.80	5
KTM MC 495-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.4	249	28.0/4.21	4
Maico 490 Spider-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.2	240	27.0/4.72	4
Suzuki ALT50-'83	June '83	ATV	Two-stroke	N/A	90	N/A	1
Suzuki RM125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.4	190	29.5/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Suzuki RM500-'83	May '83	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.8	234	29.7/4.84	4
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha TT600K-'83	August '83	Trail	Four-stroke	11.7/10.8	280	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.6	214	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW R100RS-'84	March '84	2C/G	979.9	13.172/100.11	125	495	27–50	148
H-D FXRS Low Glide-'84	January '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.917/94.57	112	575	38–48	140
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.928/93.65	112	639	34–61	140
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'84	March '84	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	14.603/88.75	107	774	39–54	152
H-D XLS Roadster-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.842/93.94	106	515	43–55	138
H-D XLX-61-'83	June '83	45 deg. 2D/F	997.6	13.459/95.94	106	488	40–72	128
Honda CX650 Custom-'83	May '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.560/102.97	119	454	38–48	124
Honda CX650 Turbo-'83	March '83	80 deg. 2E/G	673.5	12.093/111.66	137†	538	25–44	124
Honda GL1200A Aspencade-'84	March '84	4C/G	1181.9	13.156/98.14	118	744	33–46	141
Honda Nighthawk 550-'83	July '83	4A/G	572.3	12.461/102.97	114	429	37–49	125
Honda Nighthawk 650-'83	December '82	4A/G	656.0	12.287/108.04	122	451	29–51	127
Honda Nighthawk S-'84	February '84	4A/G	696.7	12.048/109.75	125	492	28–45	125
Honda VF400F-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/F	399.1	13.588/96.35	112	402	34–51	127
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF750F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	748.1	11.890/114.64	140	511	23–39	127
Honda VF1000F Interceptor-'84	May '84	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.121/123.45	150	536	23–45	125
Honda V45 Sabre-'83	September '83	90 deg. 4D/G	748.1	12.179/111.11	128	514	33–46	130
Honda VT500 Ascot-'83	October '83	52 deg. 2D/G	490.9	13.628/93.75	112	411	41–61	129
Honda VT750C Shadow-'83	April '83	45 deg. 2D/G	749.6	12.906/100.78	127	484	48–55	132
Kawasaki GPz550-'84	July '84	4A/F	553.8	12.559/105.38	123	436	32–59	136
Kawasaki GPz750-'84	May '84	4A/F	739.0	12.114/110.97	135	502	37–47	120
Kawasaki GPz750 Turbo-'83	July '83	4A/F	739.0	11.225/123.53	146	514	N/A	N/A
Kawasaki GPz1100-'84	May '84	4A/F	1089.9	11.312/120.80	145	560	24–48	120
Kawasaki KZ550 Spectre-'83	May '83	4A/G	553.8	13.348/96.77	116†	441	44–56	137
Kawasaki KZ700-'83	August '84	4A/F	694.9	12.422/107.01	127	483	39–53	133
Kawasaki Ninja-'84	May '84	4A/F	908.2	11.181/123.62	146	523	24–44	126
Kawasaki Voyager-'84	March '84	6A/G	1286.1	13.346/97.61	116	882	28–44	142
Laverda RGS 1000-'84	December '83	3A/F	980.8	12.565/106.50	130	556	25–40	140
Suzuki GS450E-'83	January '83	2A/F	448.2	14.236/93.16	106†	384	39–49	131
Suzuki GS550ES-'84	July '84	4A/F	572.3	12.675/103.68	123	444	30–51	135
Suzuki GS650M Katana-'83	November '83	4A/G	673.9	13.238/101.01	122†	491	49–60	137
Suzuki GS750E-'83	August '83	4A/F	747.4	11.893/112.92	131†	485	35–50	135
Suzuki XN85 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/F	673.9	12.381/107.14	132†	521	34–46	120
Yamaha RZ350-'84	July '84	2A/F††	347.4	13.529/97.61	111	357	26–53	122
Yamaha XJ650 Turbo-'83	March '83	4A/G	653.4	13.059/103.32	126†	543	35–53	126
Yamaha FJ600-'84	July '84	4A/F	598.8	12.468/105.63	126	435	32–50	129
Yamaha FJ1100-'84	June '84	4A/F	1097.6	10.992/124.48	146	535	27–46	121
Yamaha 920 Virago-'83	April '83	75 deg. 2D/G	920.0	12.835/101.46	108	503	38–45	138
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137

***A**-Transverse Vertical, **B**-Vertical (single-cylinder only), **C**-Horizontally Opposed, **D**-Tandem Vee, **E**-Transverse Vee, **F**-Chain Final Drive, **G**-Shaft Final Drive, **H**-Belt Final Drive
† indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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EASTERN SALES OFFICE

Joe Salluzzo
Eastern Sales Manager
770 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10021
Phone: (212) 486-8430

WESTERN SALES OFFICE

Charles Young
Advertising Manager
20916 Higgins Court
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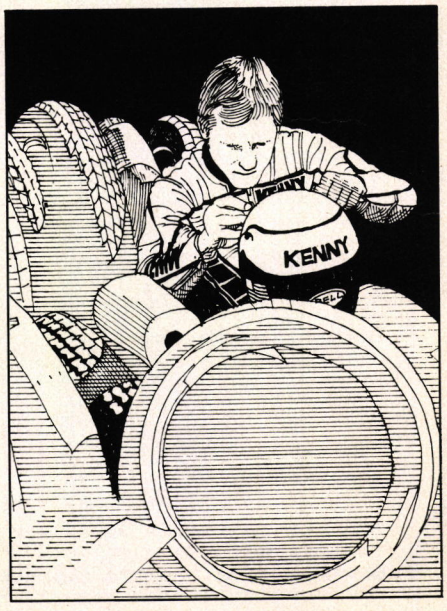


Thompson at Large

Information, Please

But not too much. And hold the digitalia.

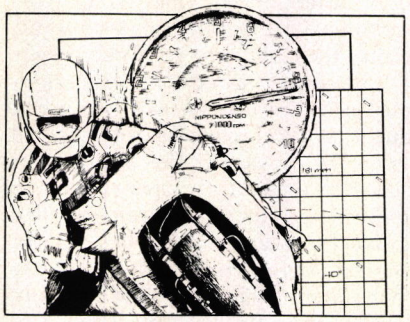
• Time was, a motorcycle was a thing of deliberate crudity. If you'd suggested in 1963 that a touring bike ought to have a digital speedometer, tachometer and gear indicator, not to mention a display for time, temperature, magnetic heading and radio frequency, you'd have been laughed out of Nick's Nasty Cycles. The idea then was that you bought a motorcycle to get away from such things. The assumption was that you liked having a Smiths speedo that gave you your speed to the nearest 10 mph via a frantically wiggling needle, and maybe even a similarly vague tach. Beyond that, you got an ammeter (another wiggling needle) and a jeweled high-beam light atop the headlight casing. In 1963, this constituted full equipment.

Not much had changed by 1973. Although most manufacturers gave you a neutral light (courtesy of the 1966 Federal Highway Safety Act), an oil light and a generator light, about the wildest development of the early 1970s was Suzuki's digital gear indicator. The assumptions of a decade earlier were still intact. No more. Nowadays, a motorcycle shop is full of hardware with mobile video games for dashboards. The assumptions have changed. Crudity, on any motorcyle, is Out. Digitalia is In.

You don't have to be a curmudgeon to wonder if the shift is a good one, to wonder whether or not the new emphasis on a panelfull of information enhances or distracts from the ride. And if you're looking for a loaded question, this one will do. Not only do you have to consider all kinds of relative values (enhances for whom?), you also must explore the weightier questions of human-factors engineering, especially if you want to discuss the issue of analog vs. digital.

Most of us, of course, will do no such thing. We'll stare at the stuff and react viscerally to it, as usual predicating our opinions on whimsy. But, if you're in the market for a machine with Hollywood starfighter instruments, these are no idle concerns. Confronting you in that case is the reality of what this gee-whiz stuff might mean to you on the road.

One path to understanding this involves taking a page from the Big Book of Hard Lessons of Aviation. Because I fly airplanes to help pay for an overweening gluttony for expensive toys, I'm intimate with some of those lessons. And



where the question of instrumentation is concerned, most pilots and even most engineers still subscribe to the KISS principle: Keep It Simple, Stupid.

People not involved with aviation usually are surprised to hear that it's a deliberately conservative genre. But the hard knocks of 80 years have taught anyone who leaves the ground to respect what works, and to be suspicious of what might not. So you will find, in addition to the whiz-bang cathode ray tubes and all-digital avionics on any Boeing transport or even any hotrod fighter, what are jokingly (but still respectfully) tagged "steam gauges." These are aviation's equivalent of the Smiths speedo: antiquated, maybe, but proven beyond almost all doubt.

You'll also find, even in that Bendix, Sperry, and Collins black box collection, little deviation from the KISS principle in information display. In fact, the cockpit of the new B-767 looks staid compared with the Gold Wing Aspencade's, and it's for a reason: Exhaustive research by NASA and the manufacturers has led to the conviction that too much information is as great a hazard as too little. Further, the same research points to analog displays as, in many cases, the best for direct reading. ("Indirect" requires mental work such as calculation or translation.)

Pilots, of course, face a greater danger from confusing information than do motorcyclists, but it is worth noting that the major efforts in information display today focus on allowing the pilot to keep his head out of the cockpit, rather than staring at some instrument. The aviation community has learned that simplifying and standardizing the information fed to a pilot enhances his task, even—or maybe especially—in flying under Instrument Flight Rules, when an efficient "scan" can mean the difference between life and death for all aboard.

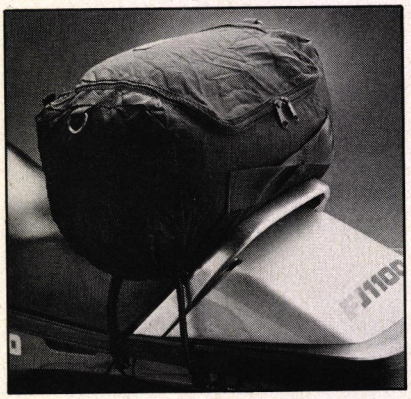
Recreation-only pilots, whose proclivities for freestyle flying and minimal equipment make them the dirt riders of the air, heartily agree. Indeed, many VFR-only (Visual Flight Rules) pilots grumble, precisely as do their two-wheel counterparts, about too much regulation that forces them to carry too many instruments. They'd like to see the standard stuff of flying reduced to an airspeed indicator, a sight gauge for the fuel tank and maybe an altimeter. But as in motorcycles, this kind of crudity is simply Out. Even in Ultralights, the latest dirtbikes of the air, the trend is toward more and more sophisticated instrumentation.

So what, on a bike, enhances the ride, and what distracts from it? As with an airplane, it breaks down into must-have instrumentation and nice-to-have. For me, the must-have list is short: a speedo with trip odometer, a tach, a clock (analog, since a digital clock forces me to calculate time rather than see it), an oil-pressure gauge, a high-beam indicator, an ammeter (since it shows system load rather than charging condition) and a neutral indicator. I don't need a fuel gauge (since nobody has ever, so far as I know, made one that's even remotely accurate for a bike), a digital gear indicator (since all I care about is whether I'm in the right gear or not, not which one it is), a compass (since where I'm going doesn't relate to magnetic heading), a radio display (since my hearing is so bad that a radio is a waste of time for me on a bike, anyway), any kind of on-board computer (since I like to keep my head out of the cockpit on a bike as well as in an airplane) and all other digitalia.

For me, this all adds up to a little more than bare-bones instrumentation, with a marked absence of digital devices. My aversion to them stems not from some deep suspicion that they'll fail at a crucial juncture, or even that they're harder to read most of the time than steam gauges, but from a liking for the information that a moving needle provides. Besides, some of the crudity from Nick's Cycles still is imprinted on me somewhere; I like the idea that a motorcycle is a thing to ride, not a device to support a panel of displays. At least not while the best display of all is available beyond the fairing. —*Steve Thompson*

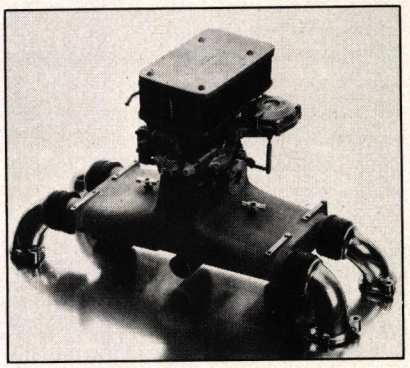
Motomart

"Will that be cash or charge?"



Bag Bag: What can you do with a bag when you have nothing to put in it? If it's a Chase Harper Hide-Away Gear Bag, you can stuff the bag itself. Made of 400-denier, 7-ounce pack cloth, the bag features a zippered opening, built-in bungees, and D-rings for a shoulder strap. The 14x9x9-inch bag can accommodate a helmet or 1134-cubic-inches of paraphernalia, and when not in use, you can fold it up into its built-in pouch. The Hide-Away Gear Bag is available for $27.95 from motorcycle dealers or from Chase Harper, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 4098, Santa Barbara, California 93103.

Four Into One: No, not pipes; CC Products converts Honda Gold Wings' four-carburetor setup to a single-carb. CC claims the carburetor kit allows owners to eliminate the tuning problems associated with the Gold Wing's four carbs, and that the coolant-heated manifold improves fuel vaporization. Further, the staged two-barrel carburetor increases fuel mileage and throttle response, and improves low-end and mid range power, the company claims. The kit fits all Gold Wings from 1975 to 1983, and retails for $489.80 from CC Products, Dept. CG, 14431 Winchester Boulevard, Los Gatos, California 95030.

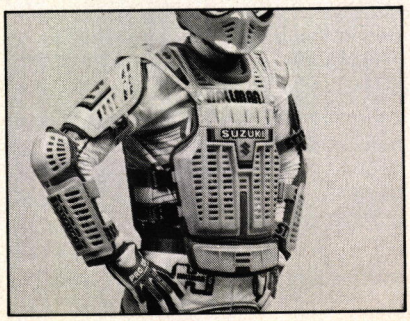


Got You Covered: There's no reason to stick your neck out when you can cover it with a Dainese Leather Bandana. The tricorner neckerchief is lined and features a snap closure at the back. Dainese also has a lined leather dickey that can be tucked into a shirt or jacket. Both the bandana and dickey are available in black, white or red. Suggested retail prices are $11.95 for the bandana, and $14.95 for the dickey. They're available from Moto Race, Dept. CG, Box 861, Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095.

Serious Inquiries Only: Not exactly, but Brooks Leather's new line of apparel is for serious motorcyclists. The Rider's Only jackets are made from 2¼-ounce leather, and include such features as action backs, padded shoulder and elbow patches, snap-type collars and zippered pockets. The jackets are available in sizes 36-50 for men and 28-40 for women, from Brooks Leather dealers. For additional information, contact Brooks Leather, Dept. CG, 14511 West Eleven Mile Rd., Oak Park, Michigan 48237.

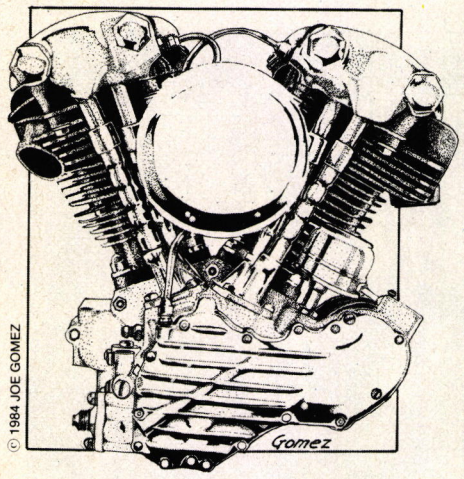
Solo Flight: If you own a VF500F Interceptor, you can go it alone with Corbin's Gunfighter solo saddle. Corbin claims the seat, which replaces the VF's saddle, uses the stock Honda latch mechanism, and that the lower seat height enhances the bike's center of gravity. The Gunfighter uses a lightweight baseplate, cast urethane-foam padding and a textured Naugahyde seatcover. The seat is available for $149 from Corbin dealers, or from Corbin Saddle, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1562, 123C Lee Rd., Watsonville, California 95077-1562.

Fore-Armored: In fact, Pro-Armor covers more than just your forearms. Hallman states its Pro-Armor gear features full protection for the spine, with a detachable plate to protect the solar plexus. The shoulder plates are designed to direct impacts into the main body harness, the company claims. The armor is thermal plastic with PVC foam padding and terry cloth lining. Suggested retail price is $89.95 for the shoulder pads/chest protector, and $12.95 for the optional forearm protectors. Hallman's protective gear is available from Rocky dealers. For further information, contact Rocky Cycle Co. Inc., Dept. CG, P.O. Box 1431, Sunnyvale, California 94086.



WISHBOOK

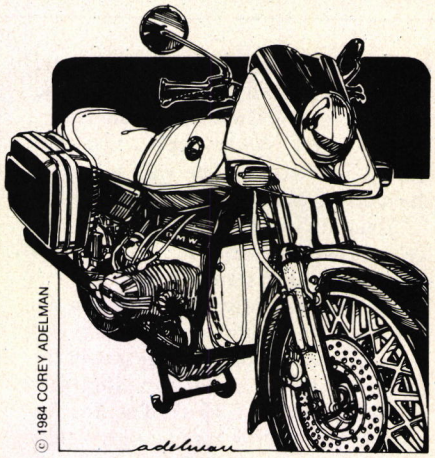
Minutes from the Last Meeting of the Council of Motorcycle Futurethink



I know that my 1972 Dunstall Norton isn't as fast, and perhaps not even as reliable, as a modern Japanese inline- or vee-four. But I sure get tired of everyone, magazines included, reminding me of that. What ever happened to simplicity? There's a lot to be said for owning a motorcycle you can service yourself.

If Japan ever returns to the basics and produces a big twin for the sporty rider, not some half-baked effort like the Tempter, or a Harley-rip like the Heritage Special, I'll be the first to start turning Japanese. But until then I'll have to stay with my Norton—not because I'm some Brit-looney; just because there's no alternative.

Richard Timberline
Calgary, Alberta
Canada



I read an awful lot of verbiage these days about sport-touring, but all it does is prompt one obvious question: Where are the bikes? Okay, so there's the RS BMW, the Laverda RGS 1000 and a couple of other European exotics, but name just one real sport-tourer from Japan. I'm not just talking about sport motorcycles that perform adequately on long rides, but bona fide sport-tourers with all-day seats, efficient full- or half-fairings, and compact, quick-detach luggage. Until the Japanese build that kind of machine, sport-touring in America will never be much more than a small-potatoes activity.

Graham Caldwell
Oneonta, New York

DO YOU HAVE THE GUTS TO BOLT ON A BASSANI?

Denny Doherty and Randy Skiver did. And look what it did for them.

Denny and Randy are two of the winningest privateers in sportsman road racing today. They can run any exhaust system they choose. And they choose Bassani.

Because it helps them win.

It'll help you, too.

Bassani Super Bike Pipes give you more torque, more mid-range, more punch, more top end power than anything else you can buy. And chances are we have them for your bike.

Here's proof.

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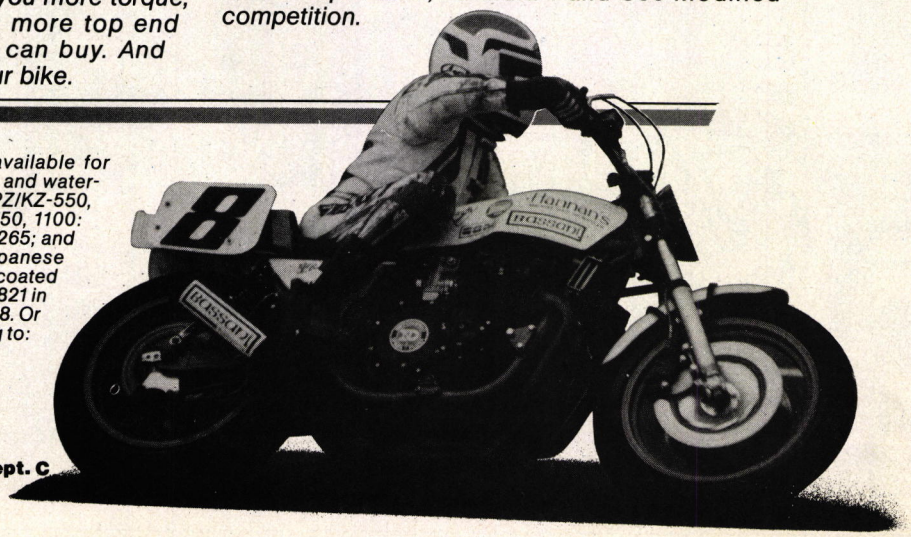
Randy Skiver: Bassani-equipped Suzuki. Winner of 11 out of first 12 starts in 1983 in District 27 AMA Super Bike, Formula 1 and 860 Modified competition.



How to order.

Bassani Super Bike Pipes are available for ***Honda*** *CB-750F, 900F, 1100F: $265, and water-cooled V-4's: $280;* ***Kawasaki*** *GPZ/KZ-550, 750, 1100: $265;* ***Suzuki*** *GS-550, 750, 1100: $265;* ***Yamaha*** *Seca 550, 650, 750: $265; and many other performance-oriented Japanese multi's. Standard finish flat black plasma-coated aluminum. To order direct, call (714) 630-1821 in California, out of state, call: (800) 854-6228. Or send full price plus $5 postage and handling to:*

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For Complete Catalog send $2.

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BEHIND THE LINES

Cycle Guide Editors' True Confessions

• The Kawasaki owner in the hotel parking lot waved frantically when he saw the Cycle Guide logo on Larry Works' jacket. Works approached cautiously, not trusting the wild gleam in the man's eyes.

"You didn't really chrome it, did you? Tell me it was a model. . .please," the man pleaded in a trembling voice.

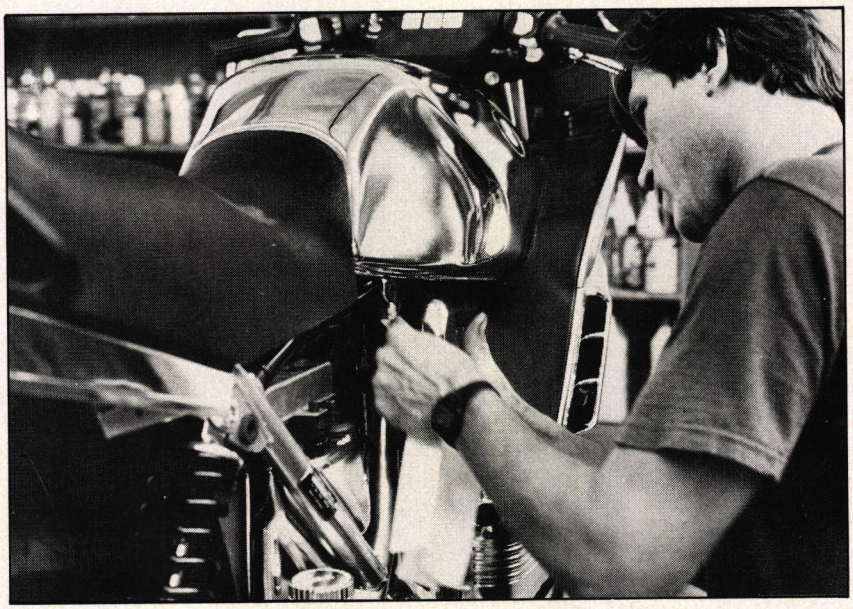
The time was July '83, just before the Laguna Seca roadrace, the place was Monterey, California, and the guy in the parking lot was understandably distressed. Our 1983 Bike Of The Year issue had just hit the stands, with a fully chromed Honda VF750F Interceptor on the cover—a bike in very short supply at the time. And it was apparent that the man thought for some group of self-indulgent editors to dip one in chrome was a crime akin to lining a cat box with the Sacred Shroud of Turin.

Works, knowing well that motolust can drive a man to unspeakable acts of violence, and also knowing that no jury would convict this person if they knew the facts surrounding the case, backed away, nodding. "Yeah, sure. It was a model. . .just a model."

But it wasn't. The bike on that cover was a 750 Interceptor, a former test bike, in fact. And we chromed it, just like we chromed the BMW K100RS for the cover of this issue. So there. But don't think we'll sign a confession. The most heinous criminals never implicate themselves; rather, they have someone else pull the trigger. George Wegner, freelance writer, craftsman and rent-a-ramrod, was the hit-man of contract in both cases. It was Wegner who took a perfectly running BMW K100 (one of very few K-bikes in the country), and reduced it to little more than the world's largest hood ornament in less than seven days. Wegner's accomplice was Vacumet, a firm that not only will chrome almost anything, but was an accessory before, during and after the fact on last year's Silver Bullet.

So now you know. But do us one favor: If anyone asks, just tell them it was a model.

—Ron Lawson



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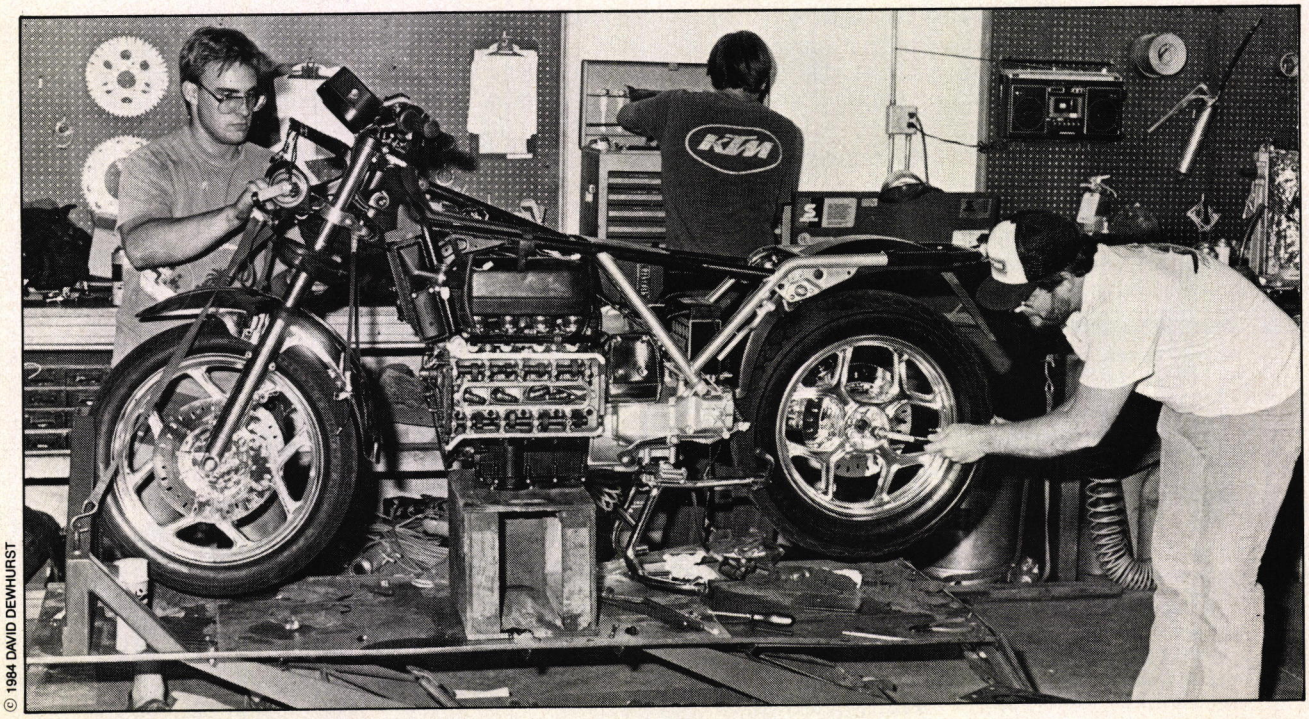

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THE BEST OF 1984

SILVER BULLET AWARDS:

Motorcycle Of The Year

Oh my God, they've chromed another one.

BY LARRY WORKS

That's right, we've chromed another one. And that shining bit of moto-art isn't just tinsel and glitter, it's the top award in CYCLE GUIDE'S Motorcycle Of The Year presentation, the coveted Silver Bullet. So get prepared; you're about to see the 1984 model year in revue, with the high points—and when appropriate, the low points—culled from the dross.

Ours isn't like any other motorcycle award ceremony. We don't just select the best from each category of bike and start doling out the kudos. In fact, there are no categories to our awards; we find them too limiting. In CG's Motorcycle Of The Year awards, if several bikes of one kind deserve mention, they'll all get it, no ifs, ands or confining pigeonholes. And when nothing of note has happened with a particular type of motorcycle, we won't waste time highlighting mediocrity. There's no room for the two-wheel equivalent of a Miss Congeniality in the hunt for the Silver Bullet.

Last year, we selected nine machines as candidates for that honor. Nine bikes that, by virtue of individual importance, distanced themselves from the pack. From those nine we selected one, the final cut in our gathering of the year's best and the brightest. Our inaugural Silver Bullet was Honda's vee-four 750 Interceptor, a motorcycle we knew was destined to affect motorcycling not only for 1983, but for all the years to come. This year, despite market pressure that resulted in fewer new models than in 1983, there were more standout motorcycles; we chose 11. Each one is worthy of your attention, and each had a shot at the Bullet. But only one made it.

It might seem odd that in a year with fewer new models we found more machines of note. It shouldn't. Moto-'84 was like no year before it. It was the first full year for ITC tariffs on large-displacement motorcycles, with new-model prices affected across the board, and a new class—700cc streetbikes—emerging from the clouds of bureaucratic mist. And although there were fewer new models than in years past, more important new bikes—as well as rumors of even more new designs to come—issued from both U.S. and European assembly lines than ever before. You'll see some of those bikes in the next few pages, along with the others that qualified as Motorcycles Of The Year. But as we've already said, only one takes home the Silver Bullet.

Continued

BMC of the Year

BMW K100RS

The Bullet stops here.

• As far as we're concerned, there's no room for doubt. Despite even more memorable motorcycles than in 1983, this year's Silver Bullet, awarded to *the* Motorcycle Of The Year, falls cleanly to BMW's new *wunder-bike,* the K100RS.

We picked the RS as the the best of Moto-'84 because as the first all-new motor cycle design from Europe in recent memory, and as the most important European motorcycle in more than a decade, it deserves top honors. Further, the RS is not just a monument to non-Japanese engineering, though many undoubtedly will consider it as such. We see it as a brilliantly conceived and executed motorcycle that not only rewrote BMW tradition in a single stroke, it redefined sport-touring, as well.

Even if the RS weren't 1984's Silver Bullet winner, it still would earn a spot in these awards because it's not merely a motorcycle—great or otherwise; it's also a three-ring balancing act. First, the entire three-bike K-series had to significantly better both the

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engine and chassis performance offered by its predecessor, BMW's R100 series. Second, to insure any chance of market success, each of the the K-series bikes had not only to measure up—and in some cases exceed—current literbike performance standards, they had to do it the hard way: without duplicating any existing motorcycle designs. And third, they had to accomplish those almost mutually exclusive goals while still appealing to BMW marque-fanciers brought up on traditional opposed-twins.

Keeping those three balls in the air was a monumental task in itself. Yet it's apparent that the K-bikes carried it off with style. In fact, all things considered, the K-bikes might have accomplished their design objectives a bit *too* well. The U.S. K-series introduction was scheduled for the fall of 1984, but publicity and advance magazine tests on all three K100s were so positive that they produced an unexpected side-effect: BMW buyers held out in droves for the K100s, and sales of opposed-twins dipped. In response, BMW launched the bike months early—meaning that this Silver Bullet is being unloaded all across the country right now.

Continued

Bike of the Year

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Yamaha FJ1100

• We were torn. If we could have put the chrome to two machines, the FJ1100 would have been every bit as shiny as the Silver Bullet Beemer. Only in a year with as many important bikes as 1984 could the FJ retain its Quartz Silver/Stormy Red paint. Yet what makes the FJ worthy of consideration isn't just a straight dose of performance—although it has plenty: The FJ1100 is the quickest streetbike ever available over the counter in America.

But the FJ is far more; this is Yamaha's first big-bore sportbike, the first time Yamaha has answered the pleadings of its marque-fanciers for hyperformance. And Yamaha got it right, first time. On that basis alone, the 1100 merits its position in this fast company. But not only is the FJ1100 a sportbike *par excellence*, not only is it the long-awaited hyperbike that Yamaha fans hoped for; it's also evidence that jumping on the bandwagon often is no more than an excercise in short-sightedness. The motoseers—this magazine included—proclaimed the air-cooled transverse-four dead and buried as a sportbike powerplant two years ago, with the introduction of the Interceptor. You see here proof positive that reports of the demise of the air-cooled transverse-four were greatly exaggerated.

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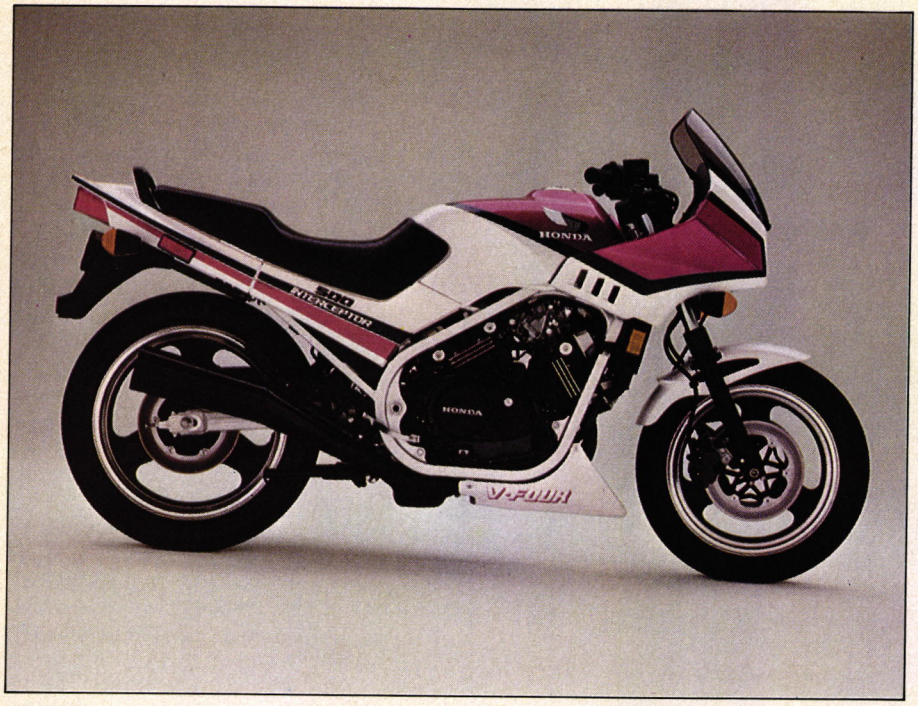
Kawasaki Ninja

• How could the Ninja *not* find itself as a contender for the Silver Bullet? It arrived as a totally new sportbike, one that shared little with the GPzs in Kawasaki's line. But that arrival was smoothed out by a lineage that traces back to the original Z-1. And because the Ninja's motor is smaller than its competition, it was almost a no-lose situation. Depending on how you look at it, the Ninja is either a hyperbike that happens to displace 908cc, or it's a 750-sized sportbike that runs with the big-bores.

Such a viewpoint isn't necessary to excuse shortcomings in the Kawasaki's performance, though, because the Ninja is competitive with any liter-plus machine that 1984 has to offer, and quite possibly is the best on a racetrack. But the Ninja's presence here is an indication of more than greatness. What you're looking at is the logical extension of the transverse-four— Kawasaki's mainstay for years. The Ninja's 16-valve, six-speed, liquid-cooled motor has a host of design features that point to it as the transverse-four of the future. More important, however, are hints that you won't have long to wait for that future to arrive, since Ninja-type machines in a variety of displacements are expected to replace the GPz line for 1985.



Honda VF500F

• Granted, Honda's VF500F Interceptor will win no awards for new technology. In fact, in overall specification, the 500 is not much more than a downscale version of last year's Silver Bullet winner, the VF750F. From its 16-inch front wheel to its 90-degree vee-spread to its mile-wide powerband, the 500 runs true to the Interceptor formula, right down the line.

Even so, the VF500F is much more than a machine living in the long shadow of its three-quarter-liter stablemate. After all, the Miniceptor is Honda's first middleweight sportbike for the U.S. market in seven years. Not since the demise of the 1977 CB400F and 550F has Honda brought in a midsize sportbike.

And the 500 is not just any sportbike. While we've promised all along that excellence by itself wasn't enough to insure a chance for the chrome, nowhere have we said anything about *perfection.* And if ever a sportbike approached that goal, it is the 500 Interceptor. It's a pure-performance sportbike so even-tempered, with such uniformly flawless steering, braking and handling, that it allows you to explore your limits as a rider, not simply chart the limits of your motorcycle.

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Yamaha RZ350

• You can't assemble a list of 1984's most important motorcycles without including the Yamaha RZ350. It simply can't be done. The RZ marks the return of two-stroke streetbikes to the U.S., a situation widely regarded as all but impossible since the demise of its predecessor, the RD400 Daytona Special, some five years ago.

Aside from that, by itself reason enough for this two-stroke wrist-rocket to earn Silver Bullet status, the RZ has other factors working for it. One-half of the RZs sold in the U.S. arrived as yellow-and-black, Kenny Roberts Special Edition models, complete down to a facsimile of Roberts' signature on the fairing—a fitting tribute to the man most identified with both Yamaha and racing motorcycles.

But despite that, and despite even the liklihood of the RZ350 being the first step in a line of Yamaha two-stroke streetbikes, the Yamaha earned its berth here for its exhaust system, which houses a two-stage catalytic convertor in each pipe to make the bike EPA-legal—though not legal for sale in California. But there is a dark side to the bike as well, for not only does it show that two-strokes can be made for the U.S., it demonstrates to anyone watching that it's possible to fit convertors to a streetbike.

Continued

Bike of the Year

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Suzuki GS1150ES

• Suzuki's GS1150ES, like many of the other candidates for Motorcycle Of The Year, won its space for a variety of reasons. First, it is one of only three streetbikes in Suzuki's 1984 line. On top of that, it is the *only* redesigned Suzuki streetbike for this year. That gets it past the first cut for the Silver Bullet. And the fact that the 1150's widely publicized quarter-mile performance made it the quickest streetbike of the year—until the arrival of the FJ1100 a few weeks later—added a touch of wry notoriety. But what qualifies the GS1150 for inclusion in this august body isn't what it is, but what it is not: a wide-band motorcycle.

Most big-bore GS-series Suzukis have always traded on the ability to perform a variety of tasks—up to and including sporting canyon charges—unruffled and with a high level of rider comfort. This year's big GS is both faster and quicker than its predecessors, but despite its Full Floater rear suspension, redesigned frame and 16-inch front wheel, the 1150 neither outhandles nor outrides the 1100-series Suzukis. At the same time, the wide-band advantage of the 1100s has been quashed, as severely as if the 1150 had been ridden through a compactor at the end of the assembly line.

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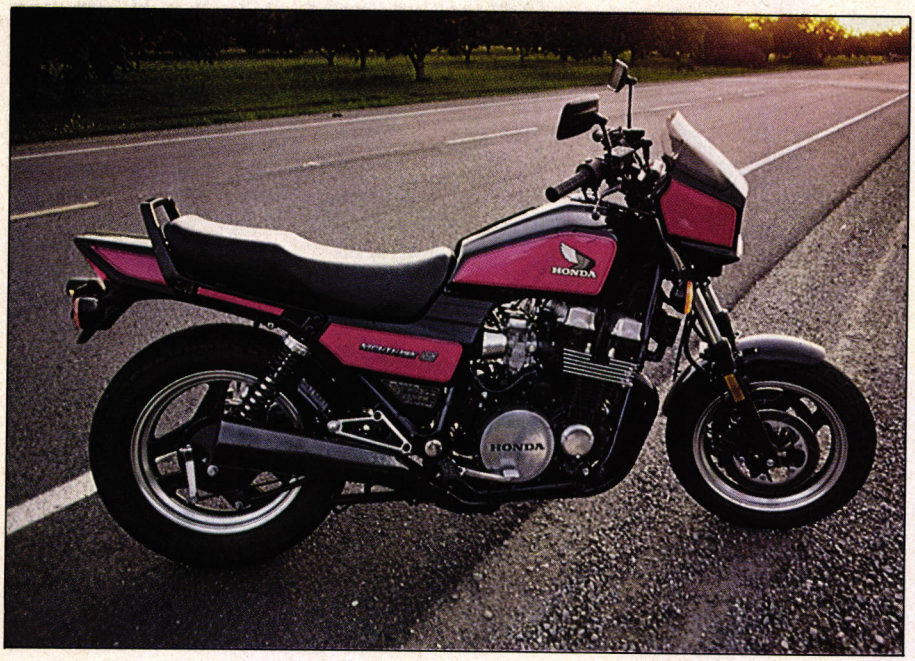
H-D FXRT

• No matter how you tally up the accomplishments of Moto-'84, you'd more or less be obliged to count the major redesign of a Harley-Davidson—not merely the shuffling of cosmetic pieces from the parts-bin—as an achievement worthy of note. We did. With the addition of Harley's V² Evolution engine, and little or no other changes in its appearance or running gear, the FXRT Sport Glide was transformed from an American Big Twin with a fairing and saddlebags traditional-style tourer that will chew up Interstates with the best of them.

Any of the V² Harleys might have been considered for a spot in this assemblage, but we chose the FXRT, with its five-speed gearbox, air-adjustable anti-dive and air-assist rear suspension as, arguably, the big-motor Milwaukee vee-twin that most successfully competes with mainstream hardware. Though by turn-key touring standards the FXRT is close to being barebones, it gives even full-boat tourers a long-distance run for their—or your— money. That's all the more remarkable when you consider that the FXRT, like all the V²-motor Harleys, made a significant technological leap in performance and reliability—without losing one whit of the traditional Harley-Davidson mystique.



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Honda Nighthawk S

• The ITC's ruling to apply a stiff tariff to large-displacement imported motorcycles did more than launch 700s as a new streetbike category. It prompted the design of a Silver Bullet candidate, as well. The first of that new wave of streetbikes was the Nighthawk S, a 12.04-second hot-rod that slid under the clipboards and flinty-eyed glare of the U.S. Customs at 697.6cc.

But the S didn't simply sidle up to the American shore and start apologizing for its sub-750-class engine. And it isn't merely a warmed-over version of an existing bike. Honda built an all-new motorcycle to satisfy the ITC's requirements—the only all-new 700 for 1984—drawing on a previous model, the 650 Nighthawk, when it was advantageous, and striking off in new directions when it wasn't. As a result, the S has the no/low maintenance hydraulic valve-lash adjusters, automatic cam chain tensioner, shaft drive and electronic ignition of the 650, with its own hot-rod heart. The S's 16-inch front wheel, quarter-fairing and the racy sound of an accessory exhaust system define its as yet another kind of Nighthawk. The mixture of elements produced a cammy, aggressive rocket that proved that while 700s might be around for a while, they can be anything *but* boring.

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• Last year, Honda's Gold Wing Aspencade, the standard of American-style touring, faced new competition from Yamaha's Venture and Kawasaki's Voyager. In reaction, Honda redesigned the entire GL line from wheel to wheel for 1984.

The redesign was a transformation, so complete that only two major components, the water and oil pumps, were carried over from the 1983 model. Not only was the Gold Wing's displacement increased and Honda's hydraulic valve-lash adjustment system incorporated, but a 16-inch front wheel—and a 15-inch rear wheel—became part of the GL package, too. Stem to stern, it was a new machine—but still close enough to the GL formula to retain the traditional Gold Wing following.

As with other candidates for the Silver Bullet, however, the story behind the machine is as important as the hardware itself. The massive upgrade that brought the GL up to '84-spec might well be short-lived. Reportedly, the 1985 model again will be remade, with another boost in displacement, the addition of fuel-injection, Pro-Link rear suspension and an automatic transmission. If the reports are true, that would make the '84 Gold Wing Aspencade the most elaborate one-year revamp on record.

Continued

BIKE of the Year

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Cagiva WMX 125

• It was virtually a foregone conclusion that of the candidates we chose for the Silver Bullet this year, one of them would be a Cagiva. It had to be, because one of the events that made Moto-'84 as a landmark year was the emergence of Cagiva North America, a firm that shows signs of developing into a major factor in American motorcycling for years to come. Although the name Cagiva hasn't yet developed the familiarity in this country that any of a half-dozen or so other motorcycle companies have going for them, Cagiva is not only the largest motorcycle manufacturer in Italy, it's the fifth-largest motorcycle producer in the world. And with Cagiva readying a major assault on the American market, you can bet the name will be familiar very soon.

Nonetheless, we didn't pick the WMX 125 simply to get in on the ground floor, as it were. The bike earned its spot here on its own. Straight out of the box, this six-speed, liquid-cooled, single-shock 125 is a real technological alternative to Japanese hardware—or any other machinery—for American-style motocross. For the moment, Cagiva North America is a force soon-to-be reckoned with. But the WMX 125 already has shown that it's a force to be reckoned with—*right now.*

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Husqvarna 400WR

• Where do you think the first liquid-cooled Open-class dirtbike for sale in America would come from? Iwata? Varesse? Asaka? Try Odeshog. Would it be the product of a dirtbike manufacturer with the reputation of being the most progressive motorcycle builder, the one most willing to break new ground, trying new ideas, techniques and technology? Maybe, but it wasn't.

Husqvarna's 400WR won its place in our Motorcycle Of The Year awards not solely for its performance as an enduro bike, though it could well be argued that no better enduro machinery has ever been for sale to the public. Likewise, a case could be made for naming the Husky's 395.6cc engine, technically remarkable only for the two downtube-mounted Nippon-Denso radiators that cool it, the finest enduro powerplant ever assembled.

We deemed the WR significant not only for its abilities in the woods but because its very existence is a reversal of trends. Husqvarna, long known for a conservative approach to new technology, took a major leap forward with the WR. Not only is the 400 the sole Open-class waterpumper, it is one of only two liquid-cooled enduro

GUIDE LINES

Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY JOE KRESS

COMING SOON

Suzuki has entered the vee-four war for '85, marching behind the Madura 1200

And with a high bar, low seat and mean look, it's a boulevard bomber.

And for the cut-and-thrust of close-quarters street work there's the new Madura Four

At 698cc it's everything the big-bore 1200 is—but less.

• Suzuki's long-rumored vee-fours have arrived, powering a pair of boulevard cruisers. The Maduras, as the bikes are called, are available either in 1200cc or 700cc displacements. They're pure customs, too, from their hexagonal-tube frames to their wire-spoked wheels. Both bikes are powered by 82-degree, 16-valve, liquid-cooled engines, using Suzuki's TSCC head design. And to keep the Madura owner with a smile on his face, rather than a wrench in his hand, Suzuki equipped both models with hydraulic valve-adjusters, hydraulic clutches and shaft drive. And shorter riders will be happy with the two-piece seats, which ride just 29 inches above the pavement. From that low-perched saddle,Madura pilots will reach forward to hefty, 1-inch-diameter handlebars, too, à la Harley-Davidson.

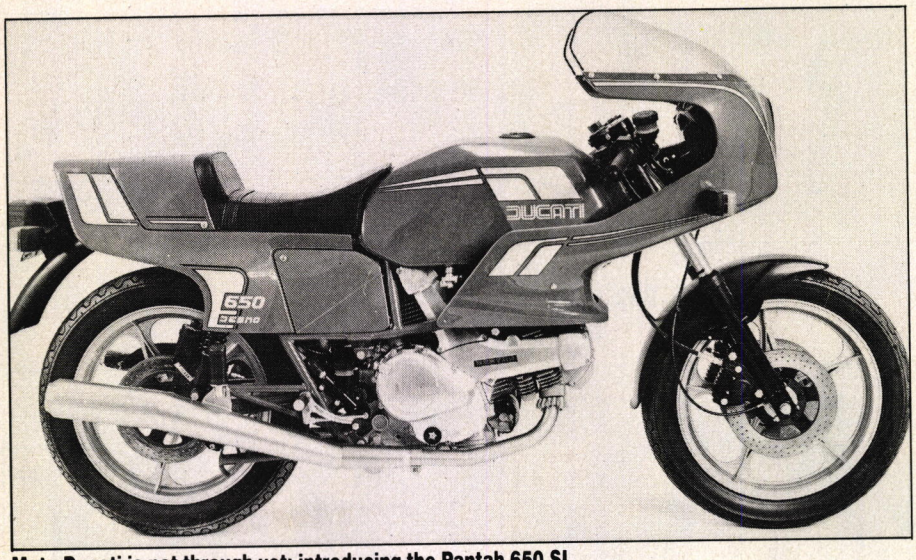
Other than displacement (the 1200 is actually an 1165, the 700 a 698), the Madura 700 differs only in detail from the big-bore version. Overall dimensions on the two bikes are very close. That's not the case with prices, though: The 700, at $3549, is $950 less than its bigger stablemate. It also has a four-into-two exhaust system in place of the big bike's four-into-four, a drum-style rear brake instead of the 1200's disc and a different seat/fender/taillight treatment.

It's no surprise Suzuki chose custom styling to showcase its first-ever liquid-cooled vee-four streetbikes—customs sell. There's also no mystery about the mid-year debut; the ITC tariff just dropped 10 percent, the first step in its five-year scale. That reduction allows Suzuki to sell the big-bore Madura for $4499 now, which is claimed to be considerably less than it would have been at the beginning of the year.

• Ducati, apparently, is not quite through building complete motorcycles. The supplier of vee-twin powerplants to Cagiva recently announced a new version of the Pantah, the largest one yet: the 650 SL. As its designation implies, Ducati has upped the displacement of its 600cc Pantah to 650cc. The bigger engine, with a bore and stroke of 82mm by 61.5, and a compression ratio set at 10.5:1, puts out a claimed 61 horsepower at 9100 rpm. Other than its jump in displacement, though, the new 650 SL continues the tradition of Pantahs of the past. The bike comes finished in Italian racing red with bright yellow trim. Reports on the demise of Ducati, it seems, have been greatly exaggerated.

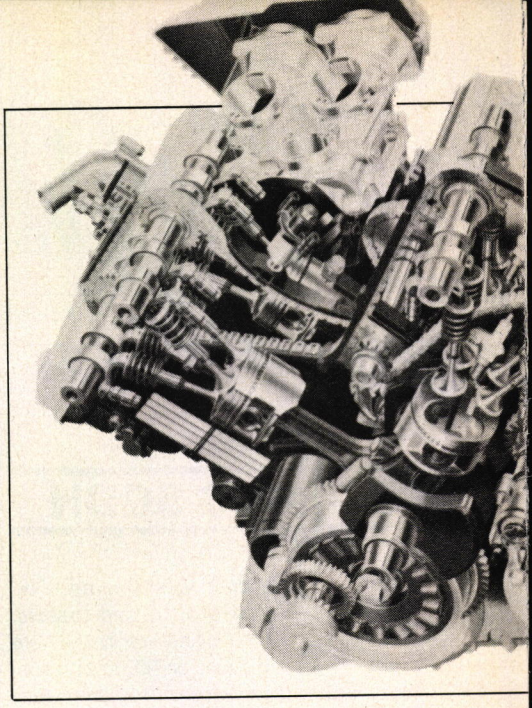
• But Cagiva doesn't rely entirely on Moto Ducati for its engines. From the wild to the mild, Cagiva is capable of building powerplants of its own. And on the wild side, engines don't come much fiercer than liquid-cooled square-fours that churn out a reported 130 horsepower at the rear wheel. That Cagiva-built screamer is mounted in the company's 500cc GP racebike. At the other end of Cagiva's engine spectrum is its 16-horsepower, 125cc two-stroke, powering the Aletta Electra streetbike. You might have a bit of a wait for a 130-horsepower square-four to show up in a Cagiva dealership, but the ap-

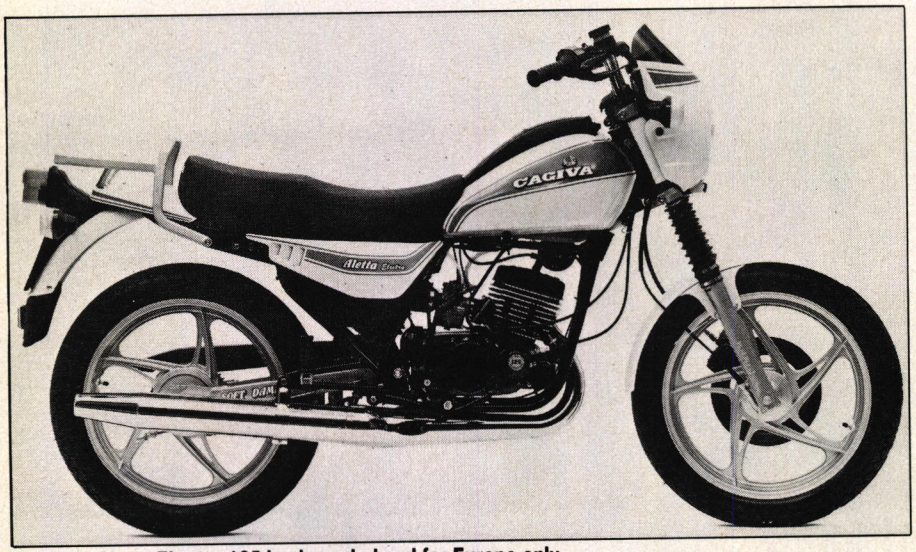
Continued



Moto Ducati is not through yet: introducing the Pantah 650 SL

There's no stopping Italians when it comes to building sportbikes.





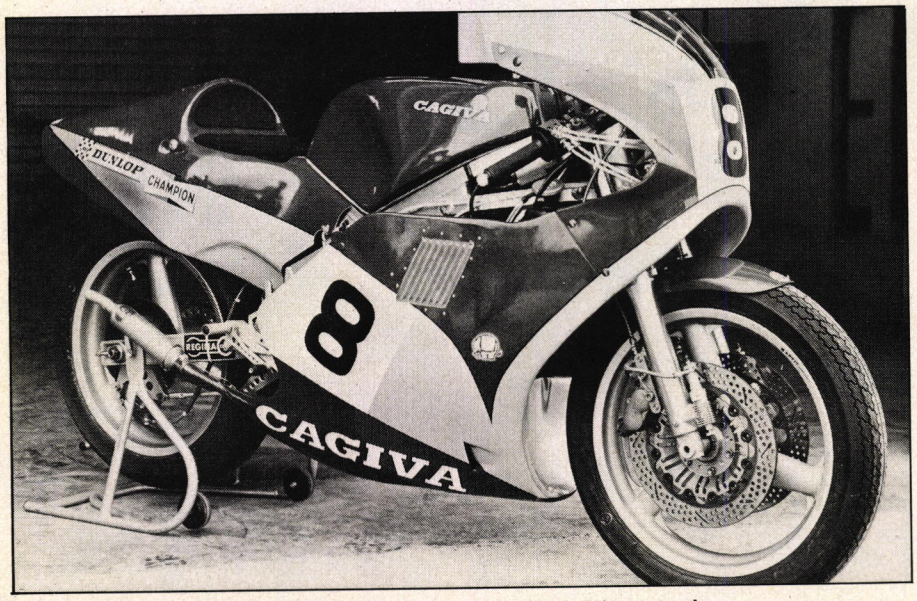
Cagiva's Aletta Electra 125 is air-cooled and for Europe only

We'll get the liquid-cooled version for '85.

pearance of a 125cc streetbike is right around the corner. Cagiva will have a liquid-cooled version of the Aletta Electra in its '85 lineup.

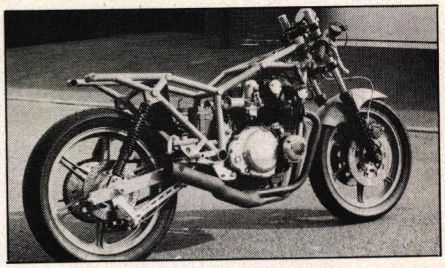
• A pair of Moto Guzzis introduced a few months ago finally have arrived in U.S. dealerships. The bikes now available are the new 650s for '84: the V-65 Custom and V-65 SP sport machine. Benelli/Moto Guzzi North America, Moto Guzzi's new U.S. distributor, has set prices at $3025 for the 650 Custom and $2975 for the SP. The third new Moto Guzzi for '84, the supersport 850-T5, has yet to make its American debut.

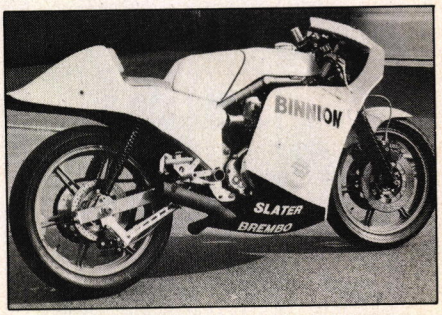
• Suzuki's venerable 550cc eight-valver has been given a new lease on life. Binnion Engineering (Porthouse Industrial Estate, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4LN, England) has come up with a new engine/frame package to allow that old Suzuki to compete with the 1984 middleweights. The engine part of the kit consists of forged pistons in rebored barrels, for a new displacement of 596cc and



Cagiva needed no help building the engine for its 500cc Grand Prix contender

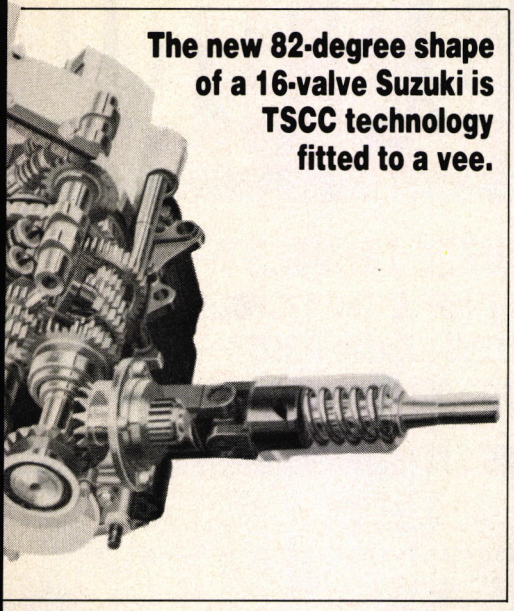
Which puts out a reported 130 horsepower—at the rear wheel.





English updates for the eight-valve Suzuki

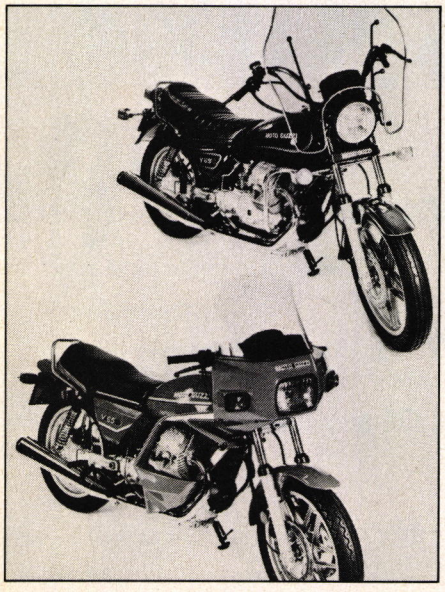
A hot-rod 550 in an all-new frame.



The new 82-degree shape of a 16-valve Suzuki is TSCC technology fitted to a vee.

a 10.9:1 compression ratio. A ported head, mounting modified GS750 Mikuni carbs, and a Binnion-made four-into-one exhaust bring the reborn Suzuki up to a claimed 75 horsepower. And for the frame, Binnion's experience with Vincent-powered Eglis and Laverda roadracers led down the traditional route. The Binnion frame is a lightweight, all-tubing twin-shocker, with a Marzocchi fork up front and a pair of Marzocchi dampers in back. EPS wheels, Brembo brakes and Binnion bodywork complete the package.

• And you thought you'd seen it all. India's Sooraj Automobiles PVT Ltd. has just released the all-time topper of strangebikes—the Sooraj 325 Diesel. And this knocker-motored two-wheeler is in full production, making it the first diesel-powered motorcycle to ever make it into a showroom. A Greaves-Lombardini 325cc stationary diesel powers this Indian oddball. For its motorcycle application, the engine has been fitted with a kickstart system



A pair of 650 Moto Guzzis is now in the U.S.

One for touring, one for sport.

Continued

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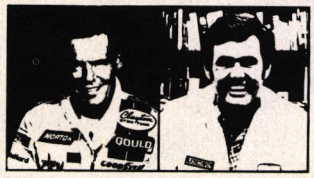

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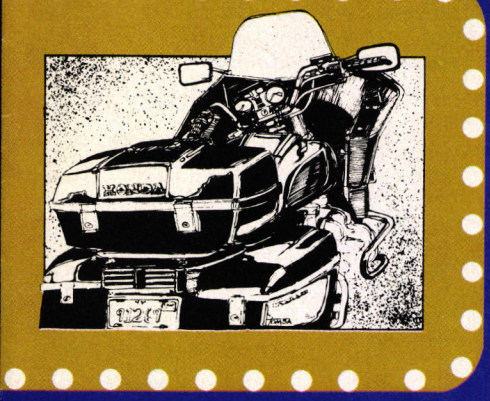

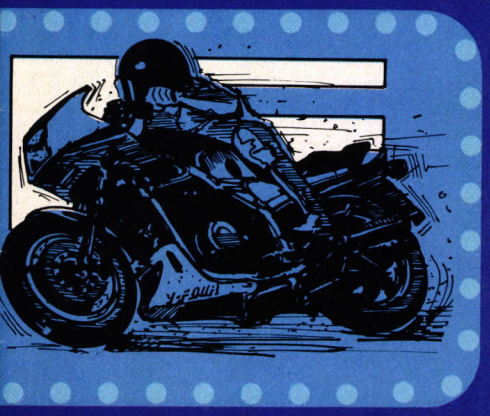

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3. All entries must be postmarked by November 30, 1984 and received by December 14, 1984 to be eligible for Drawing.

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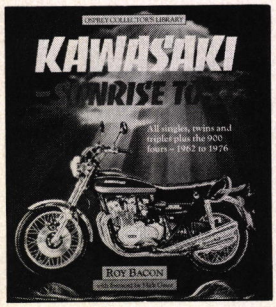
Book Review

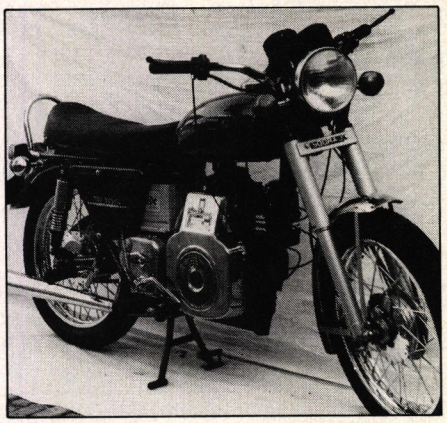


Kawasaki—Sunrise to Z1
by Roy Bacon
190 pages, $19.95
Osprey Publishing Ltd.
U.S. distributor: Motorsports
6115 Gravois
St. Louis, Missouri 63117

• Kawasaki is the smallest of the Japanese big four, yet it has the biggest name in motorcycle performance. And that's no accident, as Roy Bacon's latest book, "Kawasaki—Sunrise to Z1," explains. Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI) is a huge conglomerate with interests in rail, ship and air transportation. Motorcycles are but a tiny part of this corporation's overall picture. But KHI does indeed build motorcycles, and for one reason: At one time, the company, although huge, had an identity problem, and motorcycles—fast, high-performance models—were seen as a way to get the company publicity, and make the general public aware of KHI's technical expertise. And the plan worked; in less than 30 years the name Kawasaki has become almost synonymous with speed and performance. The company got the recognition it wanted.

"Kawasaki—Sunrise to Z1" chronicles every step KHI took to get its motorcycle division where it is today. With text and hundreds of photos, the book moves from Kawasaki's beginnings as a transmission supplier for other manufacturers, to the worldwide triumphs of the Mach III and the Z1. Bacon describes in great detail every model Kawasaki has ever made, including the ill-fated four-stroke BSA replicas and the first real successes with the 250cc two-stroke Samurai.

Not all of them were great, though, or even interesting. And that's the problem with "Sunrise to Z1." Bacon spends almost as much time and space on the lesser Kawasakis as he devotes to the really memorable ones. While the chapters on the two-stroke twins, two-stroke triples, the Z1 and all the pure-competition bikes are excellent and well-illustrated, too much of this book deals with such things as lengthy descriptions of minor design changes to the fenders of obscure 50cc stepthroughs. And, for a book with a $19.95 cover price, that's hardly spell-binding stuff. *—Joe Kress*



For real economy try India's Sooraj 325

They don't come stingier than a diesel.

Dunlop's new radials are built in Buffalo

To be standard equipment on some '85s.

and charging equipment to power the bike's electrics. On the options list, an electric starter is said to be in the works, and probably not a minute too soon; prodding over the Sooraj 325, with its 18.0:1 compression ratio, should be an experience not soon forgotten.

• On a more realistic note, Dunlop announced it has developed and refined the technology to produce radial tires for motorcycles in the U.S. market. The new radials are part of a $100 million, five-year expansion plan at Dunlop's Buffalo, New York plant. Dunlop's president, Randall L. Clark, said the prototype testing has been extremely successful, and Dunlop is, ". . . committed to producing such products for the U.S." An exact release date hasn't been announced, but the new tires are expected to show up as original equipment on certain 1985 Japanese models.

FEDERAL CASES

• Traffic officials finally are beginning to admit that motorcycles make sense for commuting. Two congested areas that could benefit from two-wheeled mobility will be Los Angeles during the Olympics and New Orleans during the World's Fair. Traffic on L.A.'s already-crowded freeways should reach new highs during the two weeks of the '84 Olympic Games, which led the California Highway Patrol to concede: ". . . motorcycles might be the best way to commute." The CHP also warned that during the Games ". . . available parking spots will be like gold," and added that motorcyclists, by being able to double- or triple-up in a single parking space, will fare much better than car drivers.

• Organizers of the New Orleans World's Fair also have taken note of the benefits motorcycles offer. To encourage more two-wheel traffic to the fair, motorcycle-only parking lots will be set up close to the fairgrounds. And, since these parking lots are asphalt and the bikes will be parked in the sun, the organizers will provide plywood squares to put under sidestands and centerstands to keep the bikes from from sinking in and toppling.

• That kind of treatment is the exception rather than the rule. More often, motorcyclists end up on the losing side of a short-sighted decision. A perfect example is the recent nighttime ban on motorcycles in the tunnel linking Detroit with Windsor, Ontario, Canada. After two late-night motorcycle fatalities, the Detroit & Canada Tunnel Corp. was told by its insurance carrier to ban motorcycles from the tunnel or risk increased coverage rates. But after meeting with a delegation from the AMA, the Canadian Motorcycle Association and members of local motorcycle clubs, tunnel managers were persuaded to institute a nighttime curfew only, instead of an outright ban. The tunnel, and the Ambassador Bridge above it, are the only links across the Detroit River between Detroit and Canada. The bridge has no restrictions on motorcycles.

• In Florida, old habits die hard. Last year, that state passed a law requiring special license endorsements for motorcyclists. Riders were required to have their existing driver's licenses validated by the DMV for motorcycle operation. A $1 fee would be charged for each year left on the license before its expiration. So far, less than 10 percent of Florida's estimated 400,000 streetbike riders have had their licenses stamped.

• Florida's requirement for a separate motorcycle license now puts that state in line with most others. Only four states, Alabama, Idaho, Mississippi and West Virginia, still allow anyone with nothing more than an automobile driver's license legally to ride a streetbike. The reason most states have enacted separate motorcycle license laws is financial: The 1966 Highway Safety Act required states to have the statutes on the books to become eligible for federal highway construction money.

• The continuing battle against mandatory helmet legislation is as hot as ever. Opponents to mandatory helmet use recently won a victory in Illinois, where the state's House Transportation Committee soundly defeated a proposed mandatory helmet law. The Committee's decision referred to a 1969 State Su-

preme Court ruling declaring such legislation unconstitutional and "... beyond the police powers of the state."

• But constitutional law isn't the only defense being used against helmet legislation. In Michigan, HB 4203 takes the high road, calling for the exemption of helmet requirements because of "philosophical" reasons. In Massachusetts, HB 5417 takes a more pragmatic approach. Riders there would be exempt from the state helmet law if they carried "sufficient" insurance.

• But legislators in New York seem more concerned about making sure motorcyclists in that state keep the rubber side down—all the way down. A bill recently was introduced there that would prohibit wheelies.

• And in California, motorcyclists now can get free legal advice through a new program called Cyclelaw. The sevice is offered by the law firm of Brenner and Rostand, of Van Nuys. There is no membership fee and, once registered, riders get a personalized card with a toll-free number good for calls from anywhere inside the state. Consultations, legal opinions and information are all free. Charges are made only if papers must be drawn up or when court appearances are required. The Cyclelaw program has been in effect since the beginning of 1984. The partners can be reached at 15643 Sherman Way, Suite 300, Van Nuys, California 91406.

HARD CASH

• BMW of North America just gave riders in the AMA's Battle of the Twins series a little more incentive to climb aboard a boxer. The company announced its Twin Challenge point fund, with a total purse of $22,500. Riders on Beemers in all four classes of the series will be awarded points for their finishes. Prize money, paid out in two installments, goes to the top five point-scorers. At mid-season, riders will share in the first $7500, with the remaining $15,000 to be divided up after the final race in the Battle of the Twins series.

• In another bit of BMW news, that company has just included Metzeler Tires as one of its suppliers of original-equipment rubber for bikes in the U.S. market. Metzeler recently reorganized its U.S. operation to provide better product availability and a streamlined warranty program. The tire company already is a BMW supplier overseas.

• It's where America shops. Sears, Roebuck and Co. has just added fairings, sound systems, helmets and soft luggage to its growing list of motorcycling accessories. The products are manufactured exclusively for Sears by Vetter, to be sold under the Vindicator label. Catering to the motorcycle market is not new for Sears; in the Sixties the company even sold Gilera motorcycles. The Vetter-made products expand Sears' current motorcycle catalog, which already includes Arthur Fulmer helmets, Cycle Seats and Kerker exhausts.

• The local U-Haul store is getting to be the place to head when you're trying to keep sum-

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mer alive. Selected agents in four sunbelt states (Florida, Texas, Arizona and California) will add Kawasaki JS440 Jet Skis to their inventories very shortly. If all goes well with this initial test program, U-Haul could make the Jet Skis available at all of its 1100 company-owned outlets.

• A hookup of another kind is the Yamaha/Ford connection. Ford Motor Co. is eager for the technology that has made four-valve, fuel-efficient motors commonplace in motorcycling, and has entered into an agreement with Yamaha to put that technology to automotive use. This isn't the first time the American auto industry has turned to the Japanese bike manufacturers for help. Even giant GM isn't above it: The only thing Chevrolet about the recently released Chevrolet Sprint is the bowtie badge on the grille—the car is produced, top to bottom, by Suzuki.

RUMORS

• Reconnaissance reports on Suzuki's '85 lineup have started to filter in. Snoops stationed in Australia's outback tell us the company might be testing a new version of the DR there, and it could be the largest single-cylinder Suzuki yet. While the actual displacement of this new four-stroke couldn't be verified, our men Down Under dug up enough information to start calling the bike the DR600.

• Talk about dropping a bombshell. KCS Engineering had our man on the Continent slackjawed. Expecting to see the company's latest camshaft design, or at best a refinement of the KCS four-valve head for Moto Guzzis, our West German contact got an eyefull on a recent unannounced visit to that speed-equipment manufacturer's shop. Hidden off in the corner was the company's latest project: a complete, liquid-cooled, vee-four engine—all made by KCS. And apparently one isn't enough for KCS. Chances are good, our man says, that the company has already developed two versions of its new engine, a 750cc model and a 1000.

• We might not have seen the last of Ducati's Pantah, and not just because of Cagiva's recently introduced 650 SL. The Italian underground suggests yet another version of Ducati's sport machine could be unveiled at the Cologne Show in late September. This latest Pantah, from a company that purportedly no longer builds complete motorcycles, is rumored to be a 750. And there's more. Our Italian insiders say there might be one more bike on Ducati's display table in Cologne: a Formula 1 race machine.

• The British Road Research Lab might have reinvented the road itself. The Lab has developed a a new paving material, said to completely eliminate the problem of standing water on road surfaces. The trick, we're told, is a honeycomb grid implanted right into a porous type of asphalt. Our men in England say it might be awhile before the technique gets into widespread use, though. Test applications on selected highways have shown that the new roads wear at an accelerated rate.

APART FROM THE CROWD

• It appears two-wheelers are becoming the darlings of the art world. First, the Museum of Modern Art put a Kryptonite lock on permanent display. Now "Ride Safe," a 17-minute film about motorcycling, has been shown at the National Educational Film Festival in Oakland, California. The film, produced by Northern Illinois University's College of Continuing Education, teaches new riders the basics of bike-handling techniques. "Ride Safe" received an Honorable Mention at the festival. Not quite an Oscar, but not bad for a first effort, either. Cut—and. . . print.

• New York's Department of Motor Vehicles won't be winning any awards, at least not from Mothers Against Drunk Driving or other like-minded groups. Five sets of personalized license plates, which had been recalled due to complaints that the plates were "patently offensive," have been reissued by the NYDMV. The plates—BOOZEMAN, BOOZEUP, BOOZE, BOOZER1 AND BOOZER8—might not be everyone's ideal motorized statement, but free speech had to be served. Dom Pedulla, a

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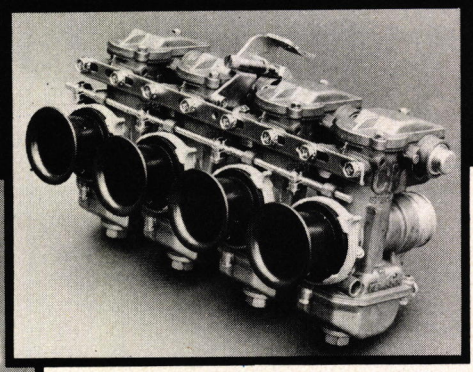

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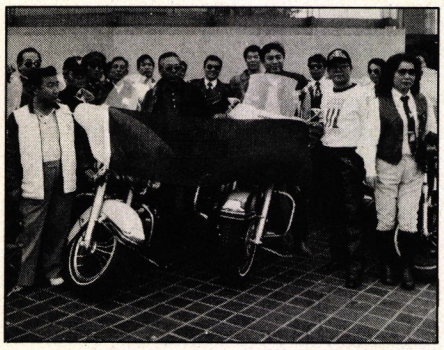
Seneca Falls liquor store owner and the original BOOZEMAN, said, ". . . it feels good to win." But how will he feel in the morning?

• Quick, what's the most prestigious and sought-after motorcycle in Japan, the birthplace of modern cycling? If you answered anything other than Harley-Davidson, you'd be wrong. According to Japanese enthusiasts, a Harley rider in the Land of the Rising Sun is looked upon as ". . . an affluent adult who appreciates quality." As well he should; only 800 Harleys are sold in Japan each year, at an average price approaching $11,000. But just owning and riding a Harley apparently isn't enough for some Japanese. Thirty Japanese fans of the Big Twin recently made a pilgrimage to York, Pennsylvania, to take delivery of new '84 machines ordered through their Japanese dealers. "Harleys have a history going back to 1903," one of them said. "To us, history is very important."



Japanese riders picking up their new bikes

In York, Pennsylvania?

• V. Basov, a motorcyclist in the Ukraine, feels rotten. While riding his bike, Basov was hit by a "daydreaming cab driver." The bike was slightly bent up, and so was Basov, but that was just a beginning. A month later he sent a letter to the local police, demanding an inquiry. As a result of the accident, Basov claimed he was afraid to ride, and he wanted the cabbie to buy his bike and reimburse him for a helmet, a pair of jeans, riding boots and a charge for the bike's battery. That totalled 520 rubles (about $624). But Basov wasn't through. He followed up that first letter with a second list of demands, this time divided into chapters. In Chapter One, "Good Nutrition During My Illness," Basov listed expenses for eight chickens, at 15 rubles each, six melons, four quarts of berries and various other fruits and vegetables totalling 100 rubles. Chapter Two, "Loss of The Moral and Physical Joys of Life," continued with eight missed movies at 10 rubles each, a 25-ruble theater show, and 50 days of ". . . swimming in the Dnepr River to feel muscular joy and fishing." He figured each day in the river was worth 10 rubles. Chapter Three, "Physical Pain I Have Suffered," put the price of that pain at 10 rubles for a kidney, 50 rubles for a foot and 100 rubles for one hand. This medical laundry list went on for seven chapters, concluding with "The Need To Continue Kidney Treatment." The demands added up to 4,394 rubles, about $5,270. He was awarded nothing. ●

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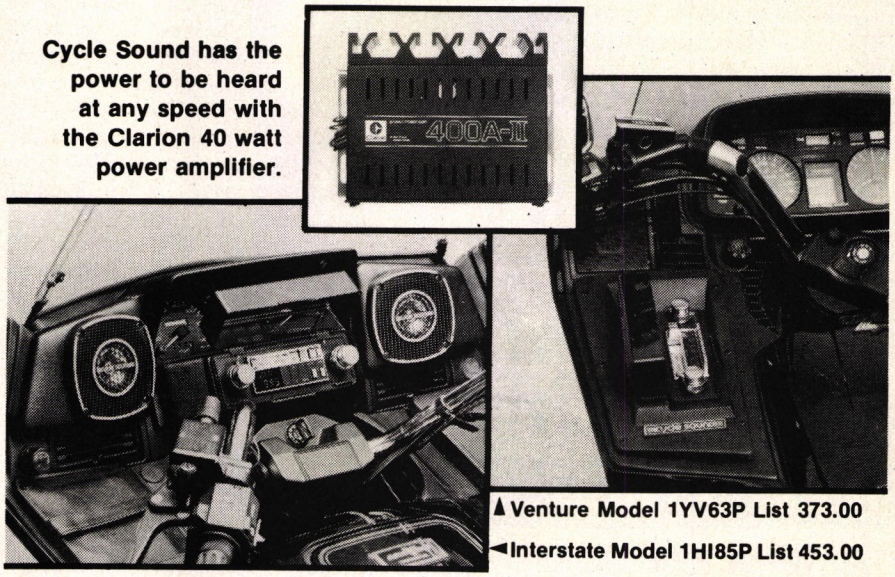

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Wheelsport Air Phones

Air tubes for in-flight communication.

• Packing double on a motorcycle for an extended journey qualifies as one of life's little frustrations. The dissatisfaction arises because it's virtually impossible for a rider and passenger to communicate coherently. About all you can do is make cryptic handsignals and shout unintelligibly.

A pair of Air Phones can make that problem a thing of the past. The Air Phones, made in West Germany by Haun-Werke Korber & Co., and distributed in the U.S.A. by Wheelsport, use air tubes to allow rider and passenger to converse, employing the same principle as in headphones used to listen to in-flight movies on passenger jets. Each Air Phone consists of a padded speaker, a boom microphone and the air tube with a plug-in connector. They're available from Wheelsport, P.O. Box 4768, Portland, Oregon 97208, or 455 McCormick Blvd., Columbus, Ohio 43213, for a suggested retail price of $34.95 per pair. The self-contained system requires no batteries, and takes only seconds to install in a helmet.

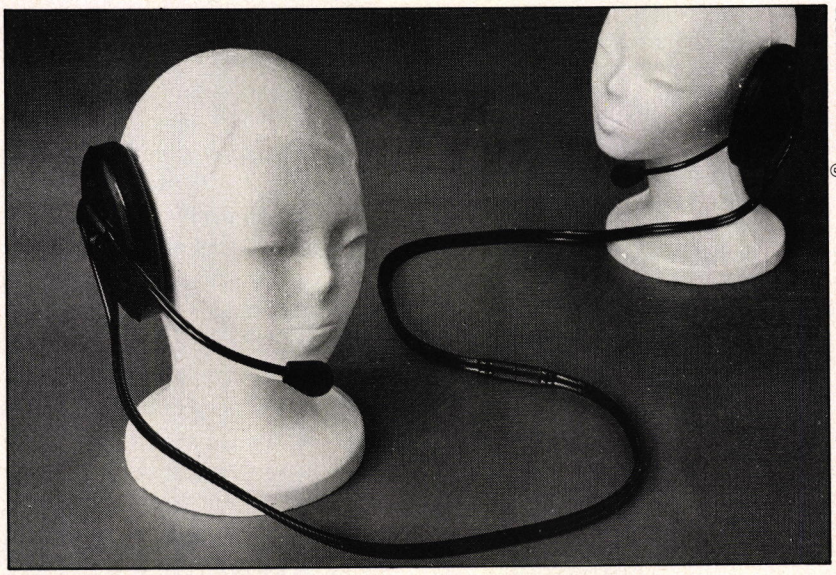
It takes a few seconds more, though, to get the Air Phones positioned properly. The speaker's thick padding makes it difficult to stuff between the wearer's ear and the helmet's liner. And positioning is critical for the system to function properly; the speaker and microphone must be directly over the wearers' ears and mouths, or the conversation is too muted to be clearly heard.

Once in place, the Air Phones work quite well, especially if you're aboard a faired touring bike. On such a bike at legal speeds, the system allows communication in tones only slightly louder than those used in normal conversation. Go beyond the speed limit, though, and wind noise begins to intrude, forcing you to speak louder to be understood. Wind roar is a larger problem on an unfaired bike; even at double-nickel speeds you have to speak up to be heard clearly. Nonetheless, shouting isn't necessary, even when you're approaching 100 mph.

Not that the Air Phones are without shortcomings. The speaker's bulky padding makes it a tight fit in many helmets, and can limit comfortable wearing-time to only a few hours. And in close-fitting full-face helmets, the microphone touches the wearer's mouth, a condition some riders will find extremely annoying.

Those are relatively minor inconveniences, though, when stacked up against the Air Phones' advantages. They're a lightweight, elegantly simple solution to the problem of rider/passenger communication. And they're vastly superior to shouting into the wind.

— *Charles Everitt*



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Wheelsport Air Phones take the frustration out of two-up travel

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The 1984 Shadow and the Shadow 500. Two machines you just don't mess with.

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ROAD TEST:

Kawasaki KZ700

The cutting edge—two years later.

• Whatever else it is, Kawasaki's KZ700 is a precise measurement of just how far motorcycling has come in the past two years. You see, this year's KZ is, with a few exceptions, a 1982 GPz750, which was considered to be a cutting-edge sportbike in its day. When Kawasaki sharpened the GPz750's sporting focus in 1983, it kept the '82 GPz, minus its quarter-fairing and with minor changes, in its lineup as the KZ750-L3. And for 1984, the '82 GPz, or the '83 KZ750-L3 if you prefer, is back again, this time as the KZ700.

The major functional difference between last year's L3 and the 700 is a drop in displacement, to sidestep the International Trade Commission's tariff on imported motorcycles of more than 700cc. For '84, Kawasaki reduced the bore of its 739cc motor by 2mm, which brought the displacement down to 695cc, 5cc under the cutoff point for the tariff. New pistons raise the compression ratio from 9.5:1 to 9.7:1, but the net result of the changes is a claimed drop of three horsepower and two foot-pounds of torque compared to the 750-L3. In actual use, however, the power difference goes almost unnoticed.

Peak power is the only area in which the 700 comes up short in a comparison with the '83 750. This year's 700 still has the same do-it-all ability of its predecessors, a fact that becomes apparent in day-to-day use. Its rubber-mounted engine is particularly obliging—with one annoying exception. The clutch plates tend to stick together when the engine is started cold, causing the bike to lurch forward and kill the engine when first gear is engaged initially. Once the clutch plates are free, the bike shifts cleanly, and you can appreciate the clutch's wide engagement point and light feel.

You'll also appreciate that the engine warms up quickly, and runs without choke within two or three blocks. The fat part of the powerband lives between 7000 rpm and the 9500-rpm redline, but there's no real need to wind the engine that high; the bike accelerates well just off idle. Four 34mm constant-vacuum Mikunis provide glitch-free carburetion, with no flat spots from idle to redline. The usable powerband isn't marred by serious vibration, either. Although some minor buzzing comes through the grips at around 4000 rpm and reappears between 7000-8000 rpm, it doesn't detract from the engine's civility.

That civility extends to the chassis, too, because the bike adapts to almost any use you might put it to. With the fork set near the low end of its 8.5-13-psi range and the shocks set on full soft, the ride is compliant without sinking into mushiness. Steering response strikes a nice balance between too much and too little as well; the 700's combination of light weight (478 pounds dry) and relatively quick steering geometry allows reactive handling that's not twitchy. Ergonomically, too, the 700 is pretty much middle-of-the-road: The low-rise handlebar affords good leverage, and the non-extreme angle of the bar remains comfortable for hours at a time. The riding position, also, is nearly ideal for everyday use, and the seat itself is one of the best.

If it sounds as if the KZ is better suited to city streets and freeways than to backroads, keep in mind that the KZ is a descendant of the GPzs, and the family resemblance isn't in the looks. With the rear shocks set full-stiff (No. 5 rebound damping and No. 7 preload) and 12 psi in the fork, the KZ700 can hustle down a winding road almost as fast as an '84 GPz750. In fact, in tight corners, the KZ's quicker steering gives it something of an advantage over its pure-sport sibling, particularly in quick transitions. As cornering speeds climb, however, the KZ700 shows a need for more rebound damping at the rear, because even with the suspension set full-hard, the 700 does a mild wallow through fast sweepers. High speeds also point up a need for better tires; the hard, narrow Dunlops make the KZ feel skittish near the limit, and the front tire squirms under hard braking. Up to eight-tenths or so, though, the KZ's handling is excellent,

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

and the fact that it's not on par with today's front-line sportbikes is more a comment on the state of the art than an indictment of the KZ's behavior.

But in some ways the fact that the KZ is not the latest high-tech design is something of an advantage, at least in comparison to the '84 GPz750. The 700 lacks Kawasaki's ineffective hydraulically actuated anti-dive, with the major result being a front brake with excellent feel, right to the point of lockup. And although the KZ does not have the *a la mode* single-shock rear suspension, suspension adjustments aren't buried under the seat or sidepanels, either.

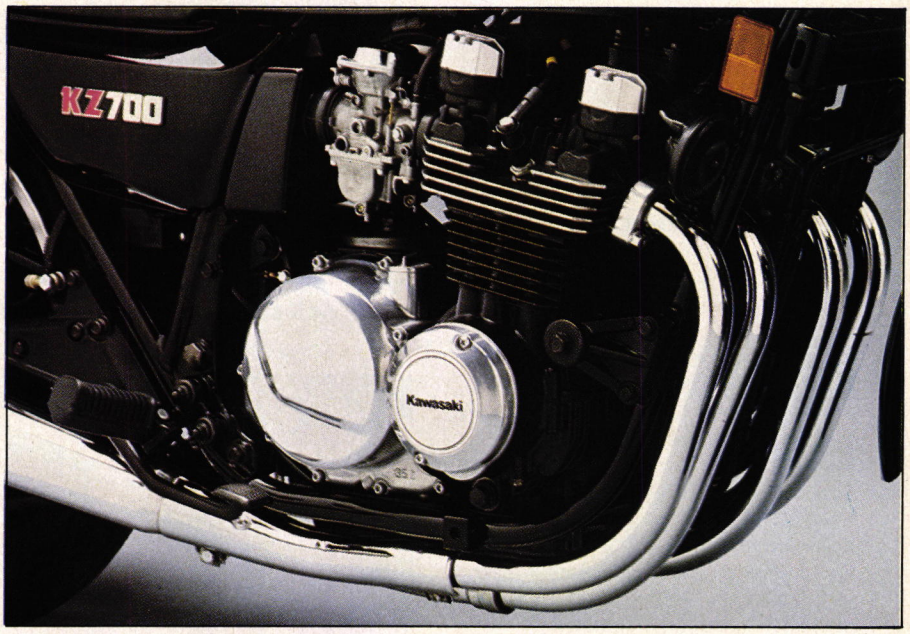
While the 700, despite its roots, can't be considered a state-of-the-art sportbike, it doesn't have to carry that flag for Kawasaki; other machines, from the GPz750 to the Ninja, can handle the sport chores. And as a general-purpose streetbike, the 700 is far from obsolete. As one of a decreasing number of broad-spectrum motorcycles, the KZ's major requirement is versatility, and at that the bike excels. It also points out that progress is sometimes a matter of two steps forward, one step back. As long as we've got bikes like the KZ around, we won't forget where we're heading—or where we've been.

—Jim Miller

KAWASAKI KZ700

Importer: Kawasaki Motors Corp.
2009 East Edinger Ave.
Santa Ana, California 92711

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$2999
Engine type	four-stroke transverse vertical four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke	64.0mm x 54.0mm
Displacement	694.9cc
Compression ratio	9.7:1
Carburetion	four 34mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/5.9 in. (150mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	dual Kayaba shocks, 5-position adjustable rebound damping, 7-position adjustable spring preload/4.5 in. (114mm)
Wheelbase	57.2 to 58.3 in. (1453 to 1481mm)
Seat height	31.7 in. (805mm)
Weight	483 lbs. (219.1kg)
Steering head angle	27 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.2 in. (107mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.422 sec., 107.01 mph (172 km/h)
Top speed (observed)	127 mph (214 km/h)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	133 ft. (40.5m)
Fuel consumption	39 to 53 mpg (17 to 23 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available color	Ebony only



Nothing new lurks behind the KZ's engine cases

Except smaller pistons, courtesy of the ITC.

PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Bell Moto-4

For the times you don't need it, too.

• For most off-road riders, riding without a helmet is akin to swimming without a bathing suit. Sure it's possible, and some certainly do it, but most people simply would feel naked. Common sense demands that a helmet be a mandatory part of the equipment checklist.

But Bell's new Moto-4 isn't just a burden to be worn as insurance against that one-in-a-thousand ride when you need it. To be sure, the Moto-4 meets the most current safety standards, including Snell '80, and its primary mission still is to protect the wearer. But unlike its predecessors, the Motostar and Moto-3, the Moto-4 breaks ground in areas more associated with comfort and function than with safety.

Rating high on both the comfort and function scales is the Moto-4's removable liner. Any motocrosser will realize the value of that if he's ever pulled his helmet out of his gear bag and found that all the cats in the neighborhood suddenly take interest. With traditional helmets, the exterior is easy to clean, but getting the sweat, mud and smell out of the interior is a problem that not even Lysol can handle. The removable liner in the Moto-4, though, makes it a simple matter of pulling out the polypropylene interior and throwing it into the washer. Serious racers might even consider buying extra liners. Bell sells them at a suggested retail price of $17.95.

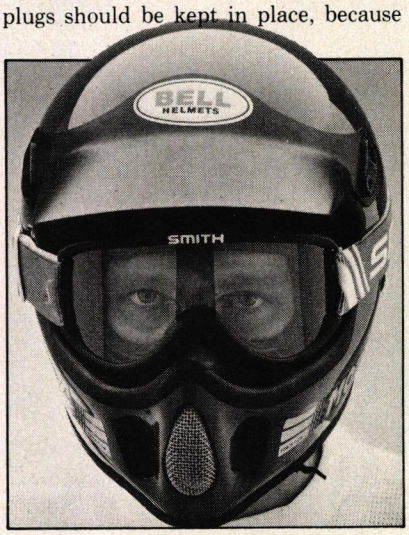
For now, you'll have to buy replacement visors from Bell, too, because the Moto-4 does away with the traditional snap-on unit. Instead, the visor attaches to the sides of the helmet with plastic screws. This allows the rider to adjust its angle according to his tastes, either up to offer an unrestricted view, or down to keep the sun out of his eyes. The visor also features a strip of foam that prevents dirt from slipping between the visor and helmet, and eliminates the rattle that traditionally plagues snap-on visors. Replacements for the Bell visor might be hard to find until some aftermarket companies get in on the act—for now, Bell is the only source and $7.95 is the only price.

Liners and visors notwithstanding, the Moto-4's most notable feature is the Force Flow ventilation system. This consists of an air vent on each side of the helmet that leads to a network of channels throughout the interior. Two more vents at the rear of the helmet allow the air to exit, creating a circuit through which air can flow. Bell claims this results in a sort of central air conditioning, keeping the rider's head cool and preventing sweat from accumulating. And on the track, your head will, in fact, stay cooler in the Moto-4 than it would in the Moto-3. But when we closed the front vents with the rubber plugs Bell provides, we discovered that only half of the credit goes to the ventilation system—the Moto-4's large eye-port also allows air into the helmet. For muddy rides, the plugs should be kept in place, because the vents are difficult to clean.

There are other, equally small hitches in Bell's latest creation. The bagel-shaped head-pad falls out of the helmet at every opportunity. And the ventilation system funnels sound directly into the rider's ears. Dirt and small rocks invariably find their way into the helmet, too, giving the Moto-4 a tinkling sound when you shake it. There even was one case of an insect finding its way into the ventilation system and buzzing throughout a moto. And at $184.95 in any of its five colors, the Moto-4 makes an expensive bug motel.

These are minor distractions, though, and don't detract from the Moto-4's being the most innovative dirt helmet in years. The Moto-4 is the only helmet around now that does more than sit on your head waiting for that one-ride-in-a-thousand when you need it. The Moto-4 is made for those other 999 rides, too.

—Ron Lawson



The Moto-4 has an adjustable visor, a removable liner and central air conditioning

Bell believes that safety shouldn't have to be a burden.

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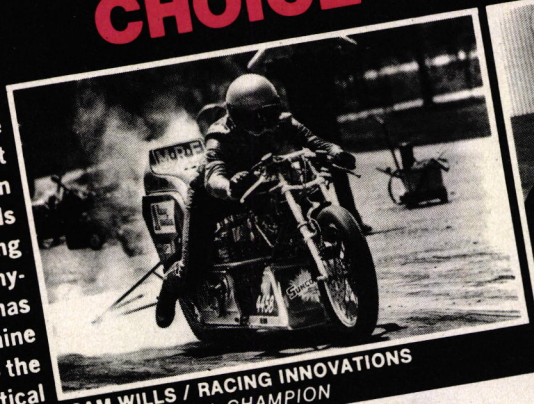
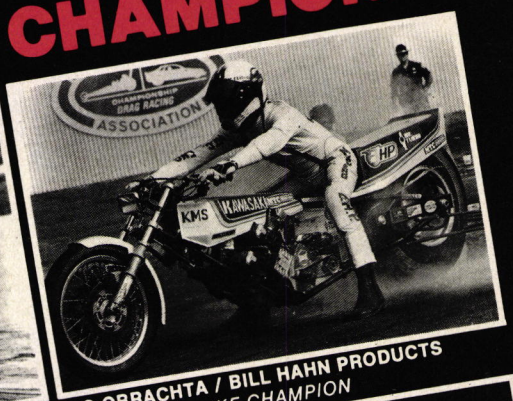


SAM WILLS / RACING INNOVATIONS
IDBA TOP FUEL CHAMPION



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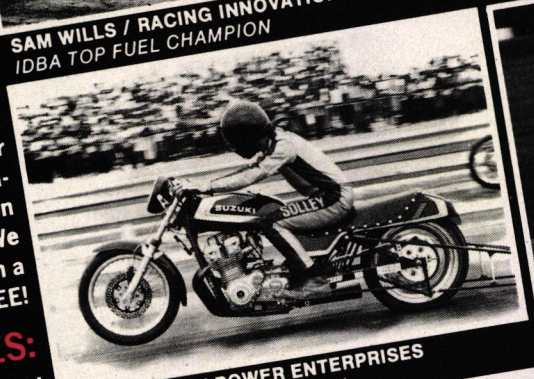

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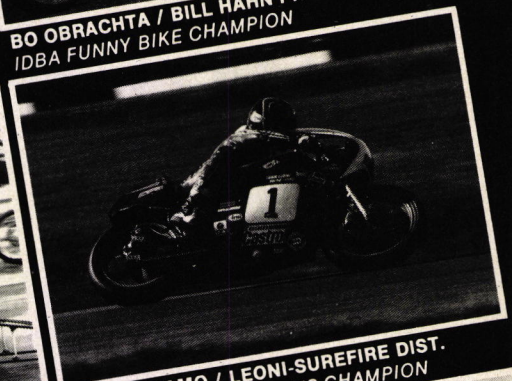

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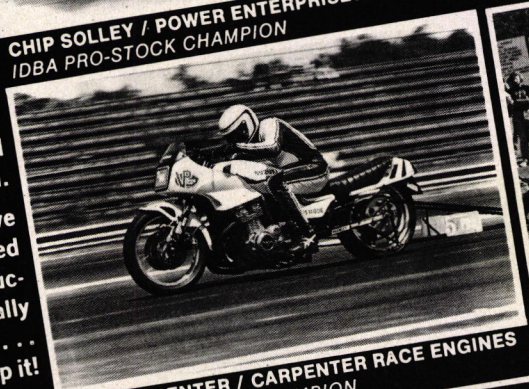

BOB CARPENTER / CARPENTER RACE ENGINES
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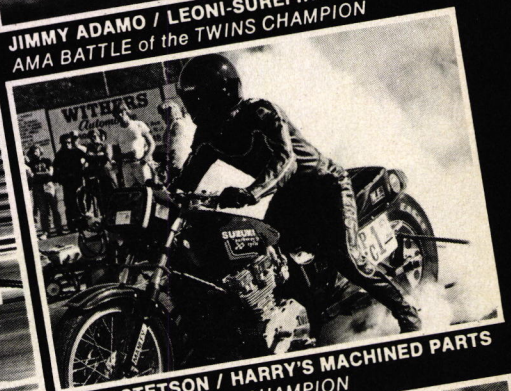

RICK STETSON / HARRY'S MACHINED PARTS
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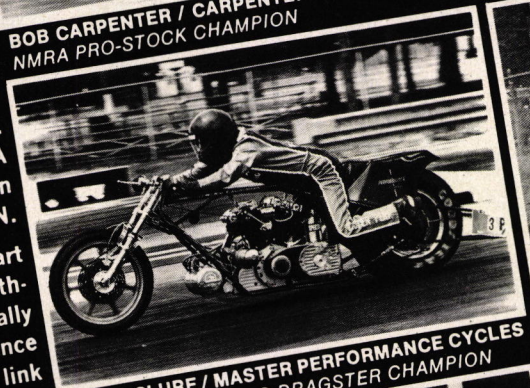

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"Occasioned by the announcement of the epoch-making superbikes which BMW calls its K-series," the dedication read, "we at CG have condensed the entire BMW Motorcycle story into this one volume for the enjoyment of our devoted readers."

And devoted they are. To the Japanese enthusiast, Car Graphic is the bible of all motorcycle and automotive writing.

Here then is the gospel according to Shotaro Kobayashi, Car Graphic's premier motorcycle journalist.

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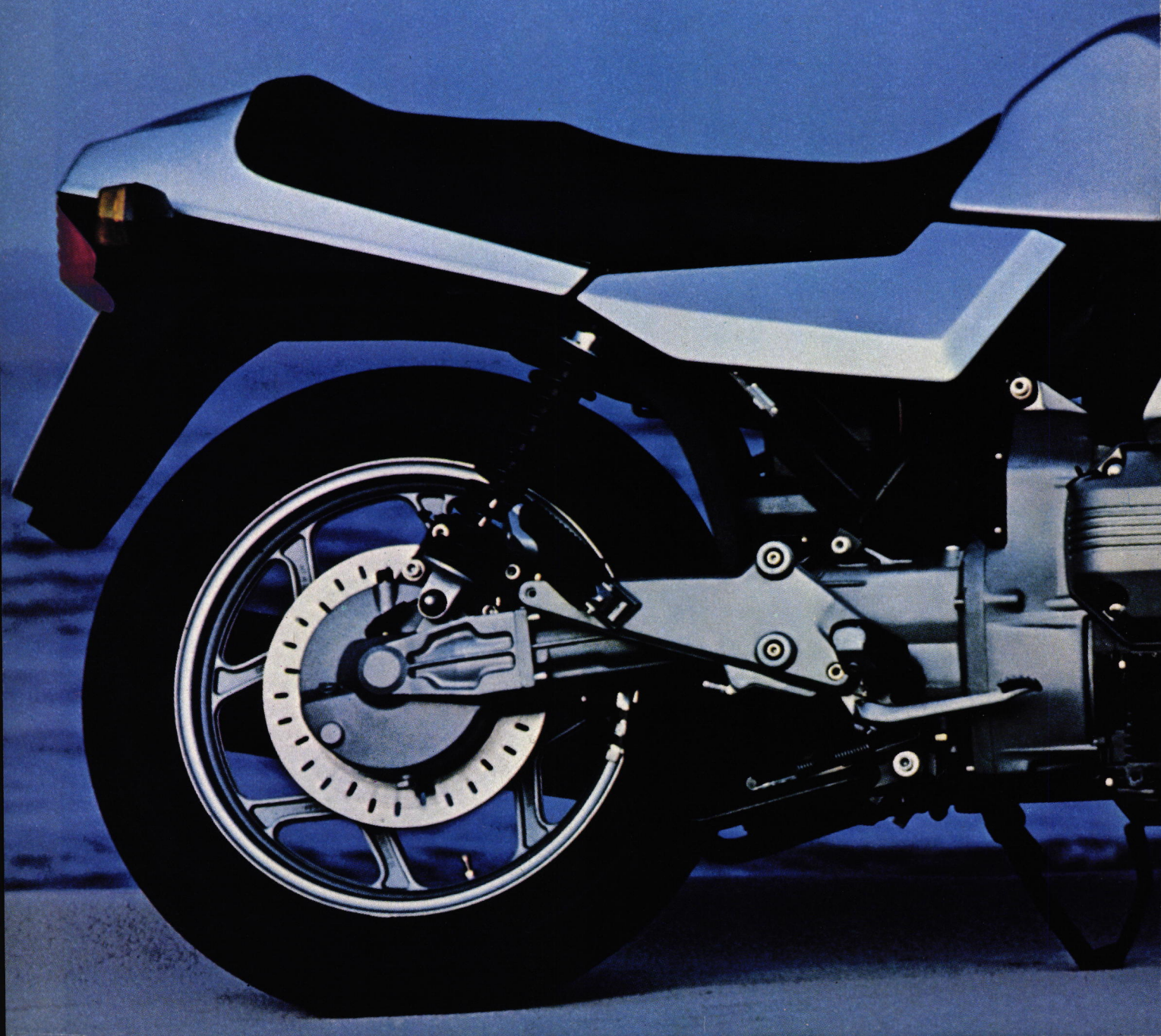

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"The K turned out to be a bike in which no flaws could be found... built with a precision that far surpasses that of other bikes...

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PRIME-TIME SPECIAL:

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A real-life rags-to-riches story. . . Hollywood style.

BY JOE KRESS

Not every cockamamie plan sketched out on a cocktail napkin ends up in the trash. Take Tom Thompson's BMW-based camerabikes for instance. Thompson's doodle not only resulted in a design that worked, but it turned into the basis of a whole new business, too. Camerabikes Ltd., the product of that single after-work sketch, has become a one-of-a-kind service catering to the likes of ABC-TV, Warner Bros. and a host of local television stations and independent film companies across the country.

Thompson's case is an exception, though. He just happened to be in the right place at the right time, when Michael Asner, a race promoter in Denver, Colorado, wanted to film his Coors Classic bicycle race. BMW was one of the race sponsors, so Asner obtained a few R100s for use as marshals' bikes and wanted one of them converted into a rolling camera platform. He approached a Denver BMW dealership where Thompson worked as a mechanic and made his request. But the service manager told Asner that putting a swivel seat and camera platform on the back of a bike couldn't be done. The motorcycle would lose all stability, and the rider, cameraman and equipment would part company at the first corner. Yet while his bosses were busy explaining why the idea wouldn't work, Thompson was planning how to do it. That night he sketched out a rough design and called Asner the next day. He told the promoter he'd build him his camerabike.

Working with sheets of stainless steel and plans just slightly more detailed than the original napkin-sketch, Thompson built the first camerabike in three days. The new tailsection turned out to be no wider than the R100's valve covers, and extended only slightly below them. The only interference cropped up with the exhaust system, but shortening the headpipes and switching the mufflers from left to right solved that. An off-the-shelf BMW solo seat was fitted for the rider and an R60/2-style saddle became the cameraman's perch. When it was finished, the total package added 70 pounds to the bike's weight.

The first cameraman to climb aboard Thompson's creation worked for a local Denver TV station. He was more than a little uneasy, not knowing what to expect. But instead of instantly toppling over as predicted, the camerabike was surprisingly stable. Nothing the cameraman did—spinning around 360 degrees, hang-

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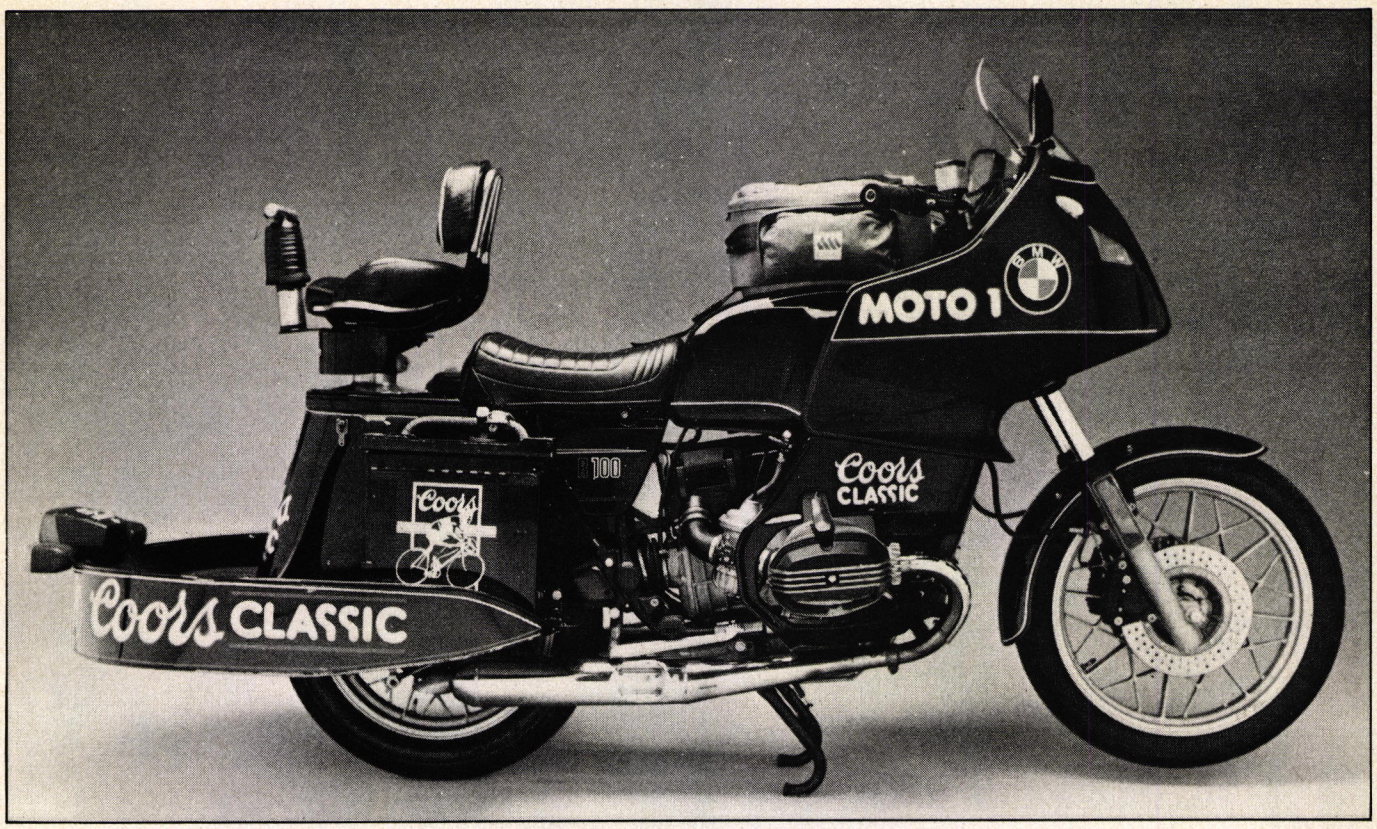

ing off either side, or even climbing up on his seat to shoot over Thompson's helmet—upset the Beemer. The camerabike not only worked, it allowed better, more exciting coverage of a bicycle race than anything tried before, and its success didn't go unnoticed. It wasn't long before motion picture film directors began lining up for the chance to put their cameramen on the back of Thompson's machine. The motorcycle's unmatched mobility for filming sports events, and its potential for the dramatic, up-close action shot was something new. The entertainment industry wanted camerabikes and it wanted them now.

Needless to say, Thompson no longer works as a mechanic in a BMW dealership. To keep up with his new, growing business, three more Beemers were converted into camerabikes, but even that wasn't enough to satisfy the demand. Now, Thompson has started to sell the camera platforms separately: For $4500 he'll supply everything needed in kit form to turn a boxer-powered Beemer into a film tool. His new office at Camerabikes Ltd. (1150 Golden Circle #406, Golden, Colorado 80401; (303) 279-3907) has become a pretty busy place these days. And customers don't hesitate to ask for special modifications, either, from microphone booms to microwave antennas. They just sketch out their requests on cocktail napkins, knowing that Thompson has worked like that before. •

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A semicircular platform with a swivel seat isn't everyday luggage on a BMW

But it's becoming the way to film a bicycle race

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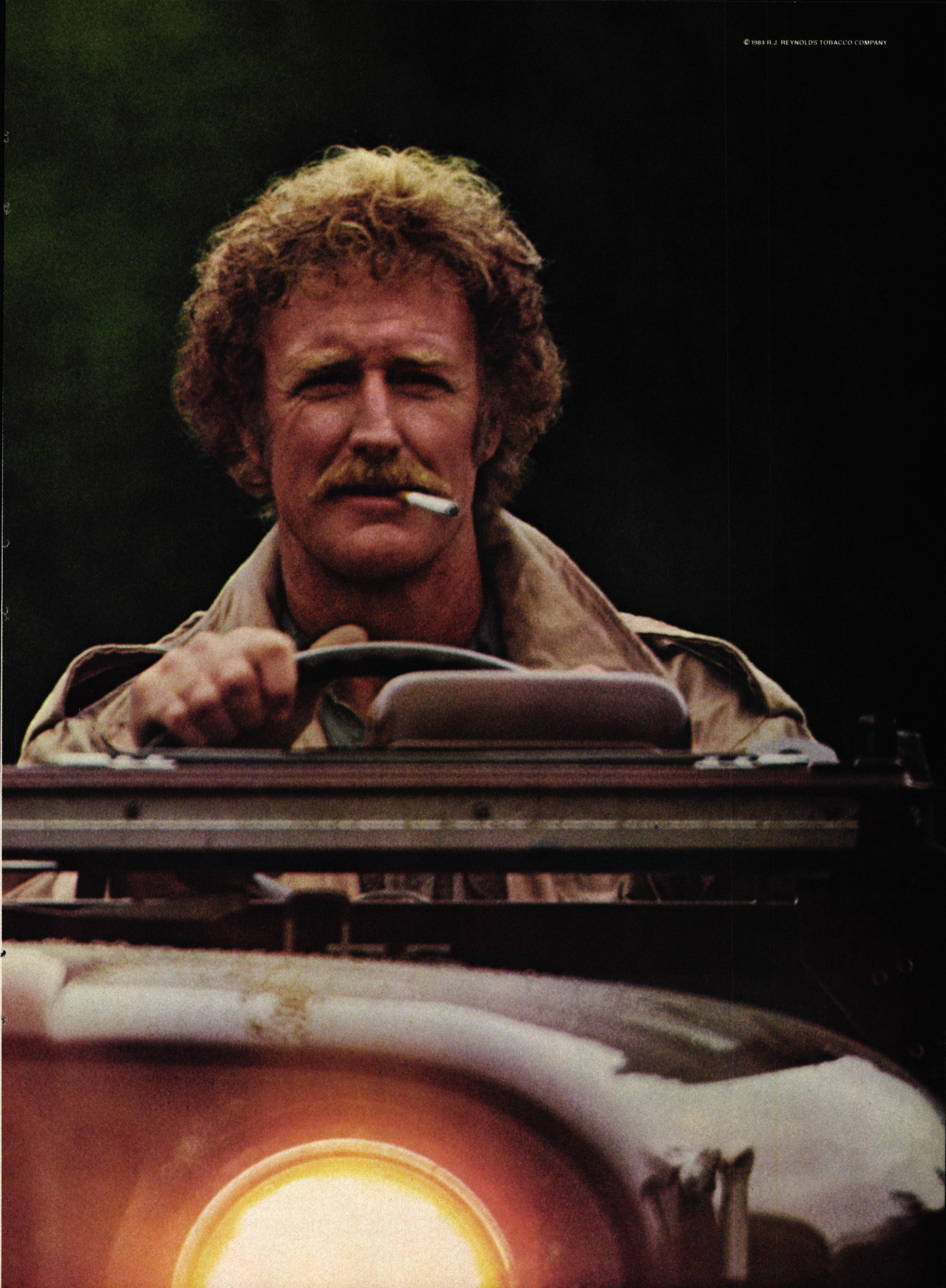


COMPARISON ENDURO TEST:

Cagiva WRX 250 vs. Honda XR200R vs. Kawasaki KDX200 vs. Yamaha IT200

The 200 class finally becomes a class of 200s.

BY RON LAWSON

At times, nothing is so unnoticeable as the obvious. For years, the 200 enduro class has been anything but a class for 200s. Instead, it was filled with 175cc or 185cc two-strokes, supplemented by an occasional slightly overbored 125. Oh, sure, Honda's XR200 has been around for years, but the XR's power output hardly called attention to the fact it was a full-size 200. No other company seemed to notice that the machines of the 200 class were running with a 25cc handicap.

Last year, though, that 25cc buffer zone became very noticeable—because it suddenly was no longer there. Kawasaki's KDX200 thundered into the enduro world and, with all the subtlety of a supernova, demonstrated that 25cc can mean the difference between just winning—or devastating the field. No other machine in the class offered the faintest hope of matching the KDX in power or any other measure of performance.

That kind of success-through-default couldn't go on. This year the KDX is faced with a new contingent of challengers, each intent on setting the woods on fire. Honda took its existing 200 and redesigned everything under the fuel tank vent hose. The new XR200R has four valves, two carburetors, eight rocker arms, and an array of tricks all designed to make the Honda not only the most competitive four-stroke ever but the most competitive 200cc enduro bike ever. Yamaha has an all-new machine, too, and it's clearly not some half-baked retaliation; it's a machine that provides the very latest in enduro technology. The IT200 replaces both the IT175 and the IT250, and promises to be Yamaha's best enduro weapon yet.

The 200-class dark horse is a new name in American enduro circles: the Cagiva WRX 250. Cagiva is an Italian company daring to go knob-to-knob with the Japanese for top honors. The WRX 250 is a bona fide 200 despite its designation—the nomenclature was carried over from Europe, where there is no 200 class.

That's quite a contrast to the U.S. enduro-bike scene, where 200-classers are the best-selling and most intense bikes available. But when assembled together, they're also a diverse and confusing array of machinery. There's no accepted formula for success—a battle among 200s means a battle between two-stroke and four-stroke, liquid-cooled and air-cooled, single-shock and twin-shock. In fact, the four machines have virtually nothing in common, aside from their goal—they're all deadly serious about being the best 200cc enduro bike made.

Continued

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID BUSH

WOODS WAR 200:

Enduro Shootout

Last year there was one. This year there are four. But on top, there's still only room for one.

BY RON LAWSON

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID BUSH

There's no doubt about the directive. Each of these four machines is designed to tear the throat out of the 200cc enduro class, but each is using a different set of claws. The group is diverse, including two air-cooled two-strokes, a four-stroke, and a liquid-cooled two-stroke. You could hardly find a more disparate group of motorcycles .

Kawasaki and Yamaha have the most in common in their enduro-bike approaches, but even these two can be called similar only because of the stark polarization of their classmates. When compared one-on-one, the KDX and IT have distinct personalities. Their engines, for example, take different approaches to the same goal. Yamaha's new 200 is a torquey machine with considerable flywheel weight. At low rpm, the IT pulls better than any of the others—including Honda's XR200R. And when rough terrain jars the rear wheel off the ground, the IT's heavy flywheel keeps the engine from suddenly gaining rpm. That means when the wheel comes down, it's more likely to hook up, not spin. The disadvantage of the flywheel weight is that fanning the clutch isn't particularly effective; with Yamaha's IT, you'll have better luck downshifting.

Falling off the Yamaha's powerband is rare, though, and the bike always climbs back with the smoothest of ease. But the IT's peak falls considerably short of the KDX200's. At high rpm, the KDX pulls away from the IT easily, and even off the bottom, the KDX has close to the IT's level of output. In fact, the KDX has the broadest powerband of all the machines. The Kawasaki has a much quicker-revving motor than the IT, too, and with proper fanning of the clutch, a rider can effectively make the KDX's powerband wider still. This technique is more associated with motocross than with enduro riding, but it's one that works well with the KDX's engine. If the motor starts to lose revs, you can slip the clutch just enough to keep the bike on top of the fattest part of the powerband. With severe abuse, the clutch freeplay slowly increases, but it quickly returns to normal after a rest. Even if you never touch the clutch, the KDX motor is so smooth it seldom scares away traction.

Traction is the least of the XR200R's troubles, though. Even though the Honda's engine is the most technologically intricate, it's lacking in sheer horsepower compared to the other bikes. The new XR has more top-end than the old XR200R, but that isn't saying much, considering the XR's reputation as a trail snail. As many enduro riders know, however, power wasn't the old XR's strong suit—at least not quantity of power. Smooth acceleration, coupled with the way the 200 refused to stop pulling, no matter how bogged down with mud it was, endeared it to enduro riders. In that respect the new Honda will again earn many fans. The powerband is so broad and unintimidating that almost *any* rider can jump on the Honda and immediately feel right at home.

Of course, some might say the XR is so slow it couldn't intimidate anyone. In enduros that require horsepower, such as those run in deserts, or on any wide-open terrain, the XR is grossly out of place. Hardcore power junkies are better off looking toward the Cagiva WRX 250, the polar opposite of the Honda. Even though the WRX has the smallest displacement of the four, it produces by far the most peak horsepower. That's not surprising when you consider that an only slightly different version of the same engine powers the WMX 250 motocrosser. When the WRX comes on the power curve, tires spin, arms stretch and eyeballs sink. But that burst of power is decidedly short-lived, because as soon as the Cagiva reaches its peak, the power trails off to near nil. And before the power surge hits, too, the output is practically nonexistent. That means the rider must have a hyperactive clutch hand and shift foot to stay in the WRX's razor-thin happy-zone. Where clutch-fanning is an option to make the best use of the Kawa-

Continued

Cagiva WRX 250

A different approach from a different country.

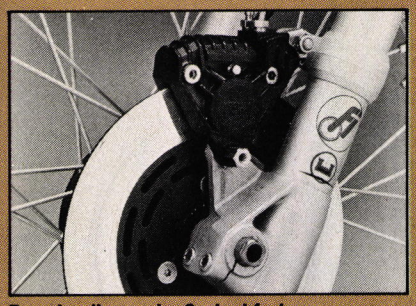
• Enduro riders are used to hand-me-down technology. That's because most enduro bikes are little more than retargeted versions of the previous year's motocrosser. The Cagiva WRX 250, in fact, goes one step further. It's based on a motocrosser that was based on another motocrosser. See, the WRX 250 engine comes from the WMX 250 motocrosser, a bike that is little more than an overgrown 125 MX bike. Cagiva simply bored and stroked the 125 engine as far as was practical to come up with an actual displacement of 190.4cc. In the case of the motocrosser, that meant that the machine gave away 60cc to the competition. But in the enduro world, 190cc is enough to match any of the other bikes for honors in the 200 class.

Actually, the WRX engine can do more than just match the other 200s. In sheer horsepower, none of the Japanese 200s even comes close to the Cagiva. The WRX's liquid-cooled top end is virtually identical to the motocrosser's, with only a lower top exhaust-port edge for more low-end power. Like the WMX, that exhaust port is supplemented by two smaller exhaust ports, one on each side of the main opening. And also like the WMX, the WRX has a linerless cylinder. The inside of the aluminum barrel is coated with a nickel-silicon compound that is claimed to be harder than a steel liner or a chrome coating. This also means the barrel can't be bored; nonetheless, Cagiva offers four oversize pistons in increments of 0.01mm, to be installed as the cylinder wears.

There are, however, major differences between the motocross and enduro engines, the most significant of these being the WRX's wide-ratio gearbox. Additionally, the enduro gets more flywheel inertia through use of an external-rotor Motoplat ignition, as opposed to the internal-rotor Nippon Denso unit on the MX bike, and the pipe is tuned more for low-end power than is the WMX's. On the end of that pipe is a silencer that has no spark arrestor, although Cagiva offers an Answer Products' silencer/spark arrestor as an option. Another option is a VDO speedometer/odometer—in stock form the bike has none because it was designed primarily for European enduros, in which time/distance calculations are not crucial.

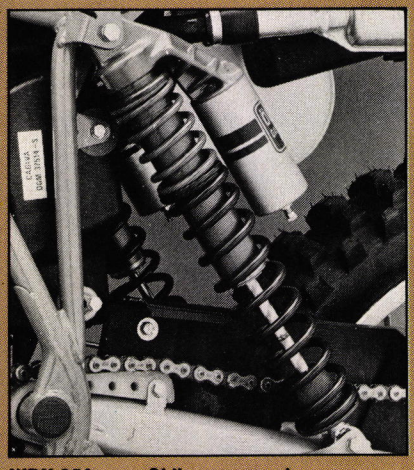
Another European aspect of the WRX is its twin-shock Ohlins rear suspension. Currently, Husqvarna is the only other company to use twin Ohlins on an enduro bike imported into this country. Cagiva maintains that the twin-shock design works as well as any other, but concedes that next year's WRX probably will have a single-shock chassis similar to the WMX's, as a concession to market demand. For now, the twin-shock Ohlins suspension system allows more room for the airbox than would a single-shock rear suspension, and the bike is still every bit as narrow as any of the other 200s. Front suspension is Ceriani, even though Cagiva more commonly uses Marzocchi. The Ceriani fork is more easily adapted to the Brembo front disc brake—and the WRX is the only bike of the four to use a disc.

In fact, the Cagiva holds little in common with any of the other 200s. From its liquid-cooled engine to its twin-shock chassis, the Cagiva seems to combine a vision of the future with a firm entrenchment in the past. Even though the WRX's origin can be traced through two other motorcycles, one thing is eminently clear: There's nothing quite like the WRX 250. *—Ron Lawson*



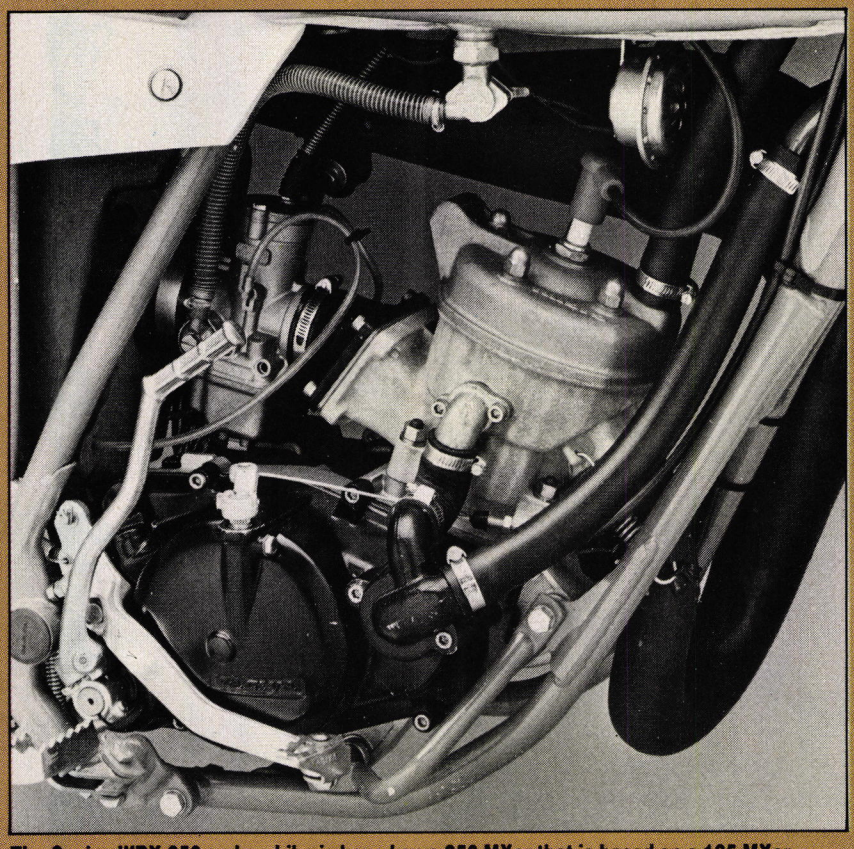
Brembo disc and a Ceriani fork

The Cagiva is different in every way.



WRX 250 uses Ohlins suspension

Twin shocks single out the Cagiva.



The Cagiva WRX 250 enduro bike is based on a 250 MXer that is based on a 125 MXer

And now it's a 250 that's really a 190 for the 200 class.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

Honda XR200R

New life for an old troop.

• Honda proved long ago that an enduro bike need not be blindingly fast or powerful to be successful. The XR200R became Honda's best-selling and most competitive enduro bike based on proven assets like simplicity and reliability; big-numbers horsepower was never prominent in the equation.

Simplicity and reliability, however, are no longer enough. The 200 class has become popular in recent times because trade-offs no longer are necessary—it's now possible to have a 200 and to have power, too. Honda redesigned the engine this year in an attempt to find enough horsepower to catapult the XR200R into the thick of the ultra-competitive lightweight class.

To achieve that horsepower, Honda used many of the same tricks found on its bigger thumpers, including the Radial Four Valve Combustion chamber (RFVC), which replaces the old the two-valve head. Like all four-valve arrangements, the XR's design permits a shallower combustion chamber that wastes less energy through heat dissipation because of its reduced surface area. RFVC goes one step further by arranging the valve heads to conform more closely to the hemispherical shape of the combustion chamber. That places the valve stems at diverging angles, and so a complex system of double rocker arms must be used. But Honda deemed the added complexity a worthwhile trade in the quest for power.

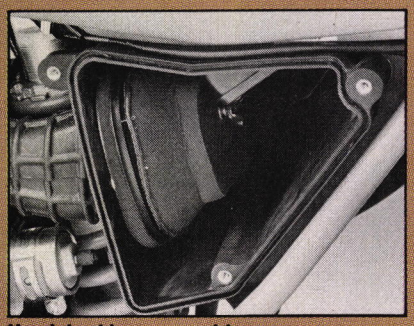
Another such trade-off is use of dual carburetors. The XR's two 20mm Keihin carburetors are mechanically linked; the left carb opens first as the twistgrip is rotated, then when the grip reaches ⅓-rotation, the right carb opens at a faster rate so that both carbs are full-open at the same time. This system combines the high air velocity—and therefore better fuel atomization—of a small carburetor with the greater airflow capacity of a large carb.

There are other new features for the 200's engine, such as a gear-driven counterbalancer and dual exhaust ports. But no matter how many new tricks Honda bolts onto the XR, it's still unlikely to outpower a two-stroke of the same displacement. So Honda also concentrated on improving the bike's existing assets, among them, handling. Honda decreased both the steering head angle and trail, to 26 degrees and 4.1 inches, to make the bike turn even more quickly than the previous model. But one asset that couldn't be enhanced was the XR's light weight. Because of the more complex engine, the '84 XR200R weighs 235 pounds—eight pounds more than the model we tested in 1981, which was little different from the 1983 model. But Honda managed to keep the additional weight low in the frame, giving the bike a lower center of gravity. The new engine isn't as tall as that of the older model, and even though suspension travel has increased considerably, the seat height is lower, in part because of a switch to a 17-inch rear wheel.

An increase in travel isn't the only thing that's new about the Pro-Link suspension system. The shock now is made by Kayaba, rather than Showa, and now has adjustable compression and rebound damping. The linkage connecting that shock to the swingarm now is made of aluminum rather than steel, and the Kayaba fork has 36mm stanchion tubes (1mm larger than used previously).

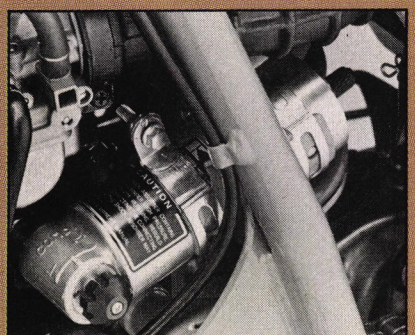
With so much of the XR becoming bigger, stronger and more complicated, it's easy to wonder if Honda lost sight of its original design philosophy: to build a simple, reliable performer. But Honda has skillfully calculated the trade-offs, and hopes to prove the 1984 XR200R has more of what previous XR200s lacked—without losing what made them so successful.

—Ron Lawson



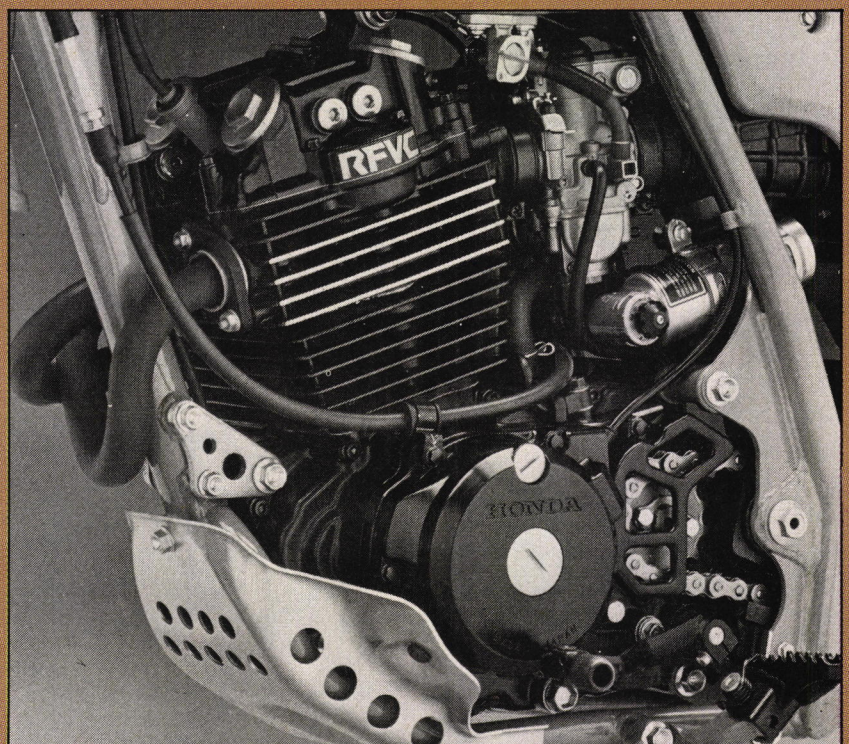
Honda's side-access airbox

Service with a smile.



XR has adjustable compression damping

It's a shock for Honda to use Kayaba.



Honda's XR200 motor is the most complex, with two carbs and eight rocker arms

And it's also the least powerful, with four strokes against it.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

Kawasaki KDX200

Sometimes, being the best means staying the same.

• When Bart Markel handed the No. 1 plate to Gary Nixon in the late Sixties, he reportedly said: "Congratulations. Now there's no place to go but down." But Markel was wrong. When you're the best, you have one other option: You can stay the best.

Kawasaki's KDX200 was the best 200-classer of 1983, despite several problems, including some seizures shortly after break-in. The clearance between the piston and the cylinder was too tight, and unless the bikes were broken-in with great care, the top end would have an exceedingly short lifespan. And because Kawasaki used its patented Electrofusion cylinder coating rather than a conventional steel liner, it was impossible to bore the cylinder.

For 1984, the KDX still has its Electrofusion barrel, but the piston-to-cylinder clearance has been increased, making the seizure problem a thing of the past. All the other features and specifications that made the KDX200 the best enduro machine to hit the lightweight class in years are still there: The porting, compression ratio, pipe and ignition are unchanged. And the KDX still has an oval-venturi Mikuni carburetor, included for much the same reason Honda uses a dual-carb system. At partial throttle openings, the smaller, lower portion of the venturi is open, giving higher flow rates and improved fuel atomization. At greater throttle openings, the larger portion of the venturi is uncovered, providing the airflow necessary for high rpm power.

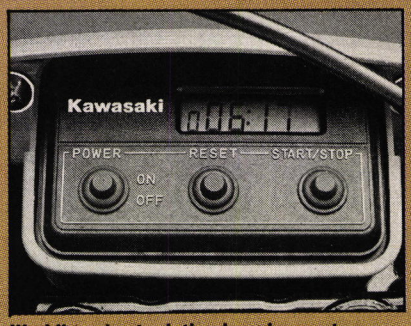
This year, the jetting in that carb is slightly leaner, a change made possible because the greater piston clearance reduces the likelihood of heat seizure. The primary goal was to increase fuel mileage. And while that might seem unimportant for a competition machine, many riders found that the old KDX barely would squeak out 50 miles before running dry—even less if conditions were muddy. The plastic fuel tank also was reshaped, but despite Kawasaki's claim of greater fuel capacity, our measurements showed the tank to holds 0.1-liter less fuel than last year's tank. Nonetheless, the '84 KDX200 does have greater range than last year's machine thanks to more efficient use of fuel.

With the seizure and mileage problems under control, Kawasaki chose to leave most of the rest of the KDX alone. Straight-pull spokes in the rear wheel and a reshaped aluminum swingarm are the only significant chassis changes. The KDX still has its single-shock Uni-Trak rear suspension, and that system still uses an aluminum-body Kayaba shock with four rebound-damping settings. The fork also is made by Kayaba.

© 1984 DAVID BUSH

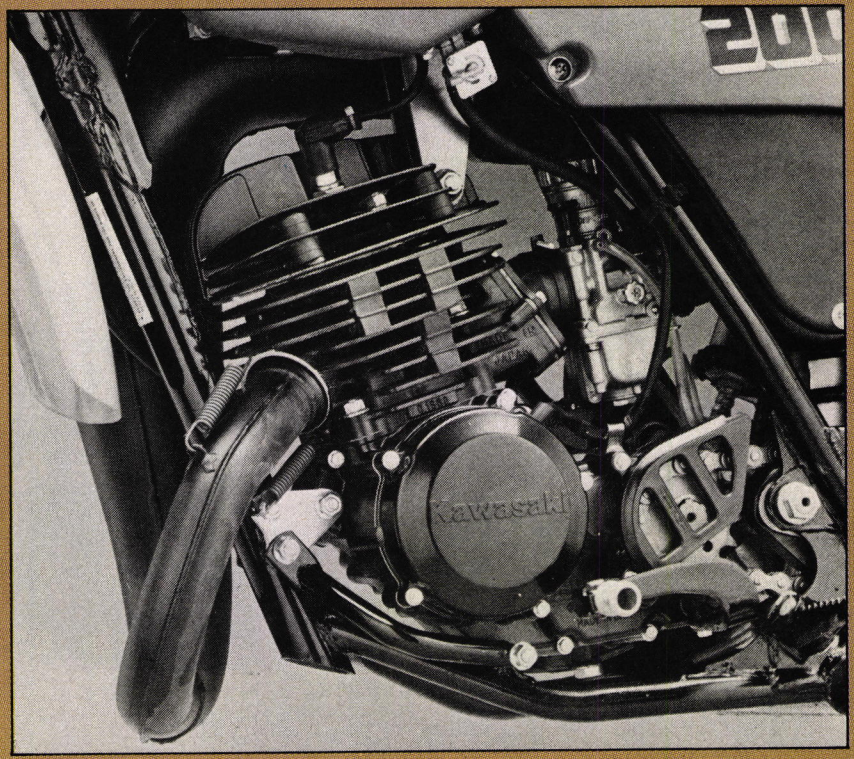
Mounted above the fork is a feature no other 200 offers. The KDX comes stock with an electronic timekeeping system. A liquid-crystal display shows elapsed time and mileage, although it can't show both at the same time. A mode button mounted on the handlebar changes the display from minutes to miles. Once you add a route chart and holder, you have everything you need to compete in an enduro.

Indeed, the KDX200 not only has all the ingredients for riding enduros, but for for winning them as well. Those ingredients were enough to make the KDX the most successful 200 of 1983, despite its flaws. And now that those flaws have been mended, Kawasaki is out to prove that old champions don't have to die or even fade away. They can go on being champions. —*Ron Lawson*



World's only stock timekeeping system

An idea whose time hasn't come.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

The Kawasaki KDX200 has the most versatile engine of the four enduro bikes

Not the fastest or the torquiest; just the best.

Continued

Yamaha IT200

Catching up or moving ahead?

• Some will claim Yamaha's IT200 exists for just one reason: the Kawasaki KDX200. But the IT is much more than a me-two-hundred; it's a legitimate enduro bike with the potential to take the 200 class by storm. Yamaha simply is a year later than Kawasaki in taking full advantage of the upper displacement limit in the 200 enduro class.

There's another reason for the birth of the IT200, too: Yamaha had to simplify its line. Dealers couldn't be expected to carry three full-size ITs that compete with each other for sales. As a result, the 200 replaces both the IT175 and 250.

The replacement borrows heavily from the old IT175, and has even stronger ties to the new '84 YZ125 motocrosser. The dimensions of the 125 and 200 are similar, and the IT also uses the new YZ-style Monocross suspension system. Last year's IT175 had the old Monocross system, with the shock mounted extremely high in the frame. Now the rear end of the shock is mounted near the swingarm pivot. The advantages of the new system are a lower center of gravity, and lighter, less complicated linkage. The Yamaha-made shock has adjustable rebound damping, although compression damping is fixed.

More evidence of the IT's YZ kinship can be found in its 43mm-diameter fork stanchion tubes. Although the fork has less travel than the YZ's, internally both forks are quite similar; each features a blowoff valve that decreases compression damping under sudden impacts. The spring tension against that valve can adjusted, so the fork's feel can be tailored to personal preference.

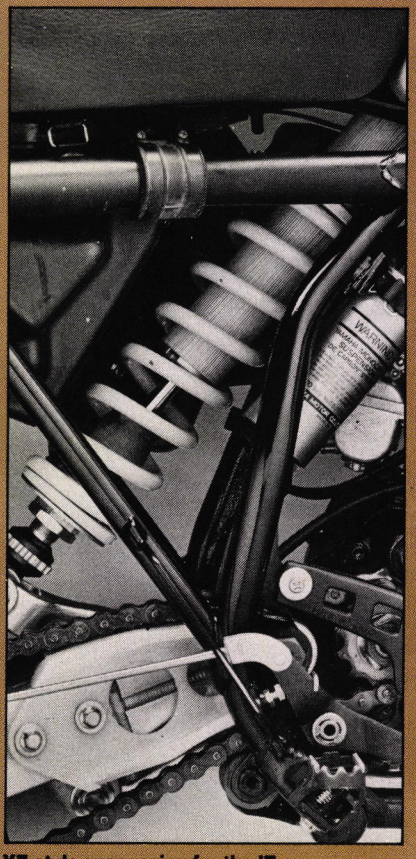
Unlike the frame and suspension, the 200's engine has much in common with last year's IT175. The 200' lacks such MX trickery as Power Valves or liquid-cooling, and its only unusual feature is the Yamaha Energy Induction System. This simply is a plenum chamber connected to the intake tract to smooth pulsations in the flow of the fuel mixture. This year, the stroke is 7mm longer, bringing the bore and stroke measurements up to 66mm by 57mm, and giving the IT a displacement of 195cc.

Making the IT engine produce more power was just one of Yamaha's goals; another was to improve shifting. To that end, the primary ratio has been lowered numerically so that the transmission shafts can spin at greater speed. Yamaha claims the gearing changes result in easier, more positive shifting, as well as a higher top speed. Internally, the only gearbox changes involve the ratios for fifth and sixth gears, which now are taller; lower numerically.

A new feature for both the IT and YZ lines this year is the Z-spoke-laced wheel. Each spoke does the work of two, with its ends connecting to opposing sides of the rim while its middle passes through the hub. Yamaha claims the Z-spokes are stronger than coventional straight-pull spokes, and result in greater spoke tension.

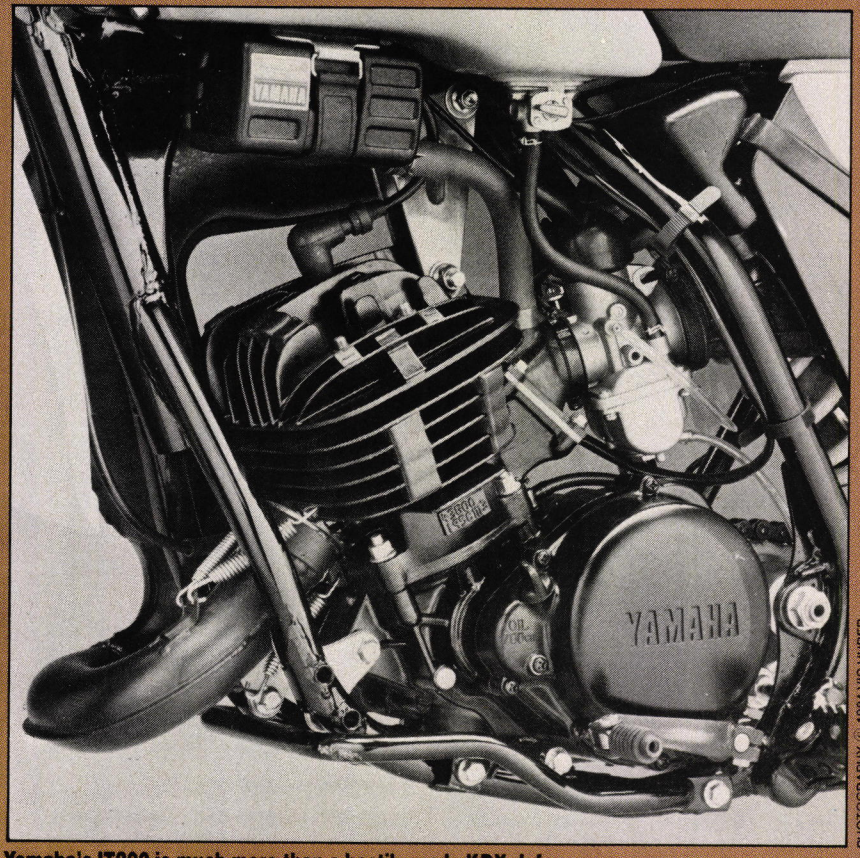
It should be clear that the IT200 is more than a quick-and-dirty KDX200 counterattack. Instead, the IT is a carefully considered enduro bike with broadly defined goals. The machine marks an update for the existing 175, a replacement for the 250 and an application of some of Yamaha's latest technology to the enduro world. As a result, Yamaha fully expects the IT not only to catch up, but to take the lead.

—Ron Lawson



YZ-style suspension for the IT

Monocross runs off its tracks.



Yamaha's IT200 is much more than a hastily made KDX-defense

The new IT has the most low-end power of any of the four.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 VIC HUBER

saki's power, it's a requirement for riding the WRX.

The Cagiva's explosive powerband even affects the bike's handling, necessitating an all-or-nothing riding style. The only way to approach whoops on the Cagiva is with a direct frontal attack. If you're not on top of the powerband, the WRX's front end won't lift, and you'll plow head-on into the side of each bump. The problem is compounded by the WRX's Ceriani fork, which is far too soft. We increased the level and viscosity of the fork oil, but the fork still was undersprung, and bottomed frequently.

We had no such problem with the Cagiva's rear suspension. In fact, the twin Ohlins shocks constituted one of the best rear suspensions in the test. They were, perhaps, sprung rather stiffly for anyone weighing less than 170 pounds; but even for lighter riders, the suspension works well as long as the rider maintains an aggressive pace—the only kind of pace the Cagiva's motor permits.

Once again, the Honda lies at the opposite extreme from the Cagiva. The XR is the easiest of the four to ride, especially where the trail is narrow and twisting. With the steepest steering head angle, the shortest trail and the shortest wheelbase of this quartet, the Honda is extremely easy to turn. But some riders will require time to adjust to the XR's steering habits. When exiting a turn on most bikes, opening the throttle usually straightens the bike. On the Honda, acceleration won't point you straight—you'll simply turn faster. So the XR requires you to point it exactly where you want to go. Being precise with the Honda's steering is easy, though, and it isn't a problem once you grow accustomed to the machine.

If you prefer fast riding over rough terrain, though, chances are you'll never grow accustomed to the Honda's suspension. The XR simply isn't made for that type of riding. Ruts and tree roots are more along the XR's intended course. Where the going includes big, closely spaced whoops, the XR is undersprung and underdamped at both ends. If the machine starts hopping side-to-side, it's hard to regain control, and the fact that it's the heavyweight of the bunch—235 pounds—becomes clear.

In contrast, the IT200, at 211 pounds, is the lightest bike of the four. That gives the Yamaha's suspension a big advantage. In fact, the IT's rear suspension is the most versatile of the group. It handles low-speed obstacles as well as the XR's, and wide-open whoops as well as the Cagiva's. The IT's fork soaks up a wide variety of terrain too, but does tend to dive on downhills and when entering turns. The blowoff-valve adjustment might be helpful for very sensitive riders, but most trail riding varies too widely for this kind of fine-tuning to be of much use. Many riders found it hard to notice any difference between settings.

Riders found it even harder to notice the difference in the weight of the KDX and IT. Actually, the KDX is two pounds heavier, but in the woods the Kawasaki feels more maneuverable than the IT. The 1984 KDX gives the rider the same feeling of invincibility that marked both the KDX175 and last year's 200. This feeling actually feeds on itself—the faster you go, the faster you want to go. The Kawasaki's broad powerband makes last-second changes in direction a simple matter. And the KDX's neutral turning

Continued

manners let the Kawasaki slide through a turn under power, skid through with rear brake, or steer with the front wheel.

The Kawasaki's suspension contributes to its handling, too. The fork is flawless, outperforming all the others easily. If you go from any other 200 to the KDX, you'll find yourself constantly bracing for impacts that never come. The KDX's Uni-Trak rear end is exceptional, too, although not quite as versatile as the IT's. The KDX's suspension is stiffer than the Yamaha's, and so caters more to fast riding. But the KDX rear suspension isn't quite as stiff as the WRX's, and so can accommodate a moderate pace as well as flying wide-open through the rough stuff.

The KDX rear suspension only feels choppy on steep downhills. This actually has little to do with the the Uni-Trak system itself, but rather can be attributed to the rear brake. The KDX lacks a full-floating brake, and braking on downhills often makes the rear wheel chatter, hop and lock. The Yamaha and Honda have the same problem, but to a lesser degree. The Cagiva's WRX 250 is the only one of the four with a full-floating rear brake, a fact that becomes quite clear while riding the bike. The WRX's rear brake isn't as strong as some of the others, but it's much smoother and doesn't chatter.

But a trade-off for the Cagiva's full-floating rear brake is the lack of a quick-detach rear wheel. The others do have Q-D rear wheels, with the Honda's design ranking best. The Cagiva does, however, have a centerstand. That might make trail-side repairs somewhat easier, but while riding, the centerstand flops up and down, making considerable racket.

The Cagiva also has the most inappropriate choice of tires for woods use. The WRX's Pirelli Sandcross tires don't seem to offer any better traction in the sand than do other enduro tires, and the knobs break and fly off on hard terrain. The Dunlops used on the Kawasaki and the IRCs found on both the Honda and Yamaha lasted longer and provided better traction than the Pirellis.

Details like that hamper the Cagiva more than any of the other 200s. There's nothing inherently flawed about the design—liquid-cooled, twin-shock, even slightly pipey enduro bikes can win. But the Cagiva's execution makes it the least appropriate bike of these four when it comes to winning American enduros. Likewise, the Honda possesses a formula that can work—and has. But the limitations of the machine are severe. Experienced riders will quickly grow tired of the Honda's engine and look toward either the Yamaha or the Kawasaki.

So, despite the diverse and unconventional weaponry now deployed in the 200 class, it's the old guard of the market that still holds the high ground. The two most conventional machines not only are the most versatile, they're the easiest to win on. And of those two, it's the *oldest* guard that makes winning the easiest of all.

That means, for riders serious about winning the 200 class, not much has really changed. Japanese two-strokes still rule the 200 class, and the KDX200 still rules the Japanese two-strokes. •

Cagiva WRX 250

Nits:

- Seat is too hard.
- No sidestand.
- Grips are hard and uncomfortable.
- Fuel-cap gasket falls out.

Picks:

- Comes with extra parts, including sprockets, gaskets and rings.

Honda XR200

Nits:

- Folding brake pedal is no less vulnerable when folded.
- Spark plug access difficult.
- No handlebar-mounted compression release.
- Service manual not included.

Picks:

- Blunt-ended levers are unlikely to snag.
- Grips are comfortable.
- Has handguards.

Kawasaki KDX200

Nits:

- Small fuel capacity.

Picks:

- Grips are comfortable.
- Frame-mounted grab bars convenient for lifting bike.

Yamaha IT200

Nits:

- Cylinder fins make engine noisy.
- Lever-adjuster covers difficult to pull off and on.

Picks:

- Shock is easily adjusted.
- Exhaust is noticeably quieter than other three.
- Has handguards.

Continued

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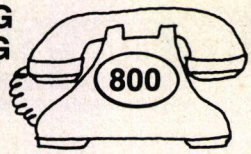

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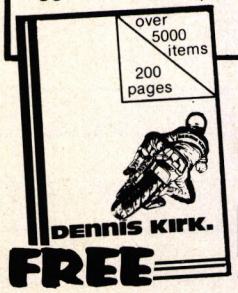

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130/90V18	REAR	65.75

TK22 SUPERTWINS

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350V19	RWL	69.75
110/90V19	FRONT	60.75

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130/90H17	RWL	56.75
110/90H18	BW	51.75
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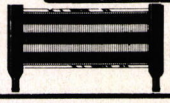

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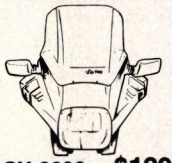

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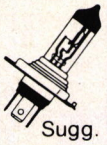

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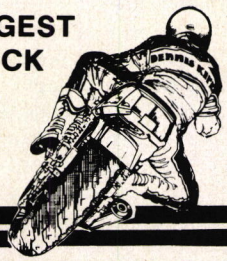

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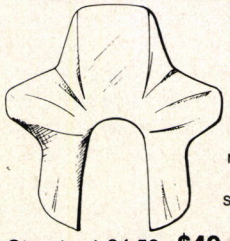

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DENNIS KIRK.

Ride Review

• No doubt, the KDX is the best of the lot for winning enduros. Everything that's been said about its performance qualities are true. And for 1984, it continues to be the best 200-class bike for threading through pine trees and scaling up boulder-strewn hills on any enduro.

Of course, winning enduros isn't necessarily *the* reason for buying a 200-class off-road bike. Fun-riding plays a key role, too. But even in that arena, the KDX is, once again, my solid pick for first—along with the other red bike in our small-bore stable, the XR200R. While the XR's four-stroke engine doesn't produce the trophy-winning power of the KDX, it nevertheless gains a gold medal for the way it delivers me to the trail's end. You see, given a choice, I'm a four-stroke fan for off-road fun; I like to slide the rear tire, and to do an occasional small wheelie without worrying about it suddenly becoming a big wheelie—a constant threat with most two-stroke powerbands.

Unfortunately, the powerbands of the Yamaha and Cagiva steer me away from both of them: The Yamaha's power delivery is too subtle, while the Cagiva is too explosive and unpredictable. I'll stick with the red bikes on this one.

—Dain Gingerelli

• Yamaha obviously went to a great deal of trouble to dethrone the KDX200. For that matter, so did Honda. The IT200, with all its revisions, is a much more competent enduro bike than last year's IT175. And Honda's little thumper is even more fun to ride than before. In fact, if the fun quotient were the only criterion for a 200-class machine, I might even own the XR.

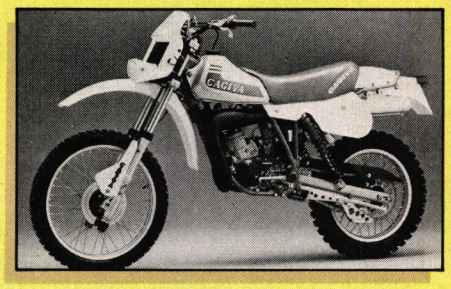
But giggles don't count for much in enduros, and I guess I'm too serious about riding to consider buying any of these four but the KDX. Despite having only minor revisions since last year, it continues to offer what I want most from a small-bore woods bike.

For slippery, rock-and-root-strewn hillsides, the Kawasaki has sufficient low-end and midrange power to keep things rolling with a minimum of wasted time or effort. Plus, there's a healthy top-end punch when you want to make tracks in a hurry. Actually, in steering, suspension and almost any other category, the KDX gets high marks. It works so well that I don't mind putting up with its scaled-down ergonomics.

So Yamaha and Honda can keep right on trying, for all I care. But they still have a long, long way to go to beat the KDX200.

—George Wegner

CYCLE GUIDE SPECIFICATIONS



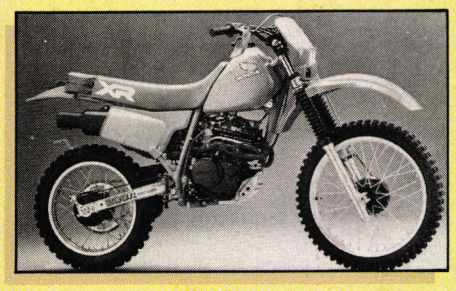
Cagiva WRX 250

IMPORTER		Cagiva North America Inc. 20030 S. Normandie Ave. Torrance, California 90502
SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE		$1489
ENGINE	**Type**	liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single
	Valve arrangement	
	Port arrangement	one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one main exhaust, two booster exhausts
	Bore and stroke	67.0mm x 54.0mm
	Displacement	190.4cc
	Compression ratio	15.7:1 (uncorrected)
	Carburetion	one 36mm Dell'Orto slide/needle
	Air filter	washable oiled foam element
	Lubrication	pre-mixed fuel and oil
	Starting system	primary kick
	Ignition	external-rotor magneto CDI
	Charging system	none; direct AC lighting
DRIVETRAIN	**Primary drive**	straight-cut gears; 3.556:1 ratio
	Clutch	wet, multi-plate
	Final drive	#520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.357:1 (47/14) ratio

Gear	Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
I	2.462	29.390	2.58
II	1.857	22.168	3.42
III	1.500	17.062	4.45
IV	1.222	14.588	5.20
V	1.000	11.937	6.36
VI	0.864	10.314	7.36

SUSPENSION/WHEEL TRAVEL	**Front**	Ceriani air-spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/ 11.1 in. (283mm)
	Rear	dual Ohlins shocks, 10-position adjustable spring preload/11.6 in. (295mm)
BRAKES	**Front**	double-action hydraulic caliper, 8.8-in. (224mm) effective disc diameter
	Rear	drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated
TIRES	**Front**	3.00-21 Pirelli MT32 Sandcross
	Rear	4.25-18 Pirelli MT32 Sandcross
DIMENSIONS AND CAPACITIES	**Weight**	232 lbs. (105.2kg)
	Weight distribution	46.6% front, 53.4% rear
	Wheelbase	56.6 to 58.0 in. (1437 to 1473mm)
	Seat height	36.3 in. (922mm)
	Handlebar width	33.3 in. (845mm)
	Footpeg height	15.1 in. (383mm)
	Ground clearance	12.5 in. (317mm), at engine cradle
	Steering head angle	30.0 degrees from vertical
	Front wheel trail	4.65 in. (118mm)
	Frame	tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
	Oil Capacity	
	Fuel tank	aluminum, 2.2 gal. (8.2/), no reserve
	Instrumentation	speedometer, odometer, tripmeter resettable in tenths
PERFORMANCE	**Top speed (observed)**	84 mph (135 km/h)
WARRANTY		none
AVAILABLE COLORS		red-and-silver only

All weight and measurements are taken with machine unladen and fuel tank empty.



Honda XR200R

American Honda Motor Co. Inc.
100 West Alondra Blvd.
Gardena, California 90247

$1625

four-stroke vertical single
single overhead camshaft, four valves

67.0mm x 56.5mm
199.2cc
11.0:1
two 20mm Keihin slide/needle
two-stage washable oiled foam element
wet sump
primary kick
external-rotor magneto CDI
none; direct AC lighting

straight-cut gears; 3.316:1 ratio
wet, multi-plate
#520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.846:1 (50/13) ratio

Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
2.769	35.314	2.03
1.941	24.754	2.90
1.450	18.492	3.90
1.174	14.972	4.79
0.960	12.243	5.86
0.815	10.391	6.91

Kayaba air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/9.9 in. (251mm)

single Kayaba shock, 14-position adjustable compression damping, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 18mm spring preload range/9.6 in. (244mm)

drum, single-leading shoe

drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

3.00-21 IRC Volcaduro VE-32
110/90-17 IRC Volcanduro VE-32

235 lbs. (106.4kg)
47.5% front, 52.5% rear
53.2 to 54.3 in. (1351 to 1380mm)
34.9 in. (887mm)
31.9 in. (810mm)
14.6 in. (371mm)
12.0 in. (304mm), at footpeg carriers
26.0 degrees from vertical
4.13 in. (105mm)
tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube
1.4 qt. (1.3/)
plastic, 2.8 gal. (10.5/), including 0.8 gal. (3.0/) reserve
speedometer, tripmeter resettable in tenths

73 mph (117 km/h)

6 months, unlimited mileage

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Kawasaki KDX200

Kawasaki Motors Corp.
2009 East Edinger Ave.
Santa Ana, California 92711

$1699

two-stroke vertical single

one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfers, one exhaust

66.0mm x 58.0mm
198.4cc
7.7:1 (corrected)
one 32mm Mikuni slide/needle
two-stage washable oiled foam element
pre-mixed fuel and oil
primary kick
external-rotor magneto CDI
none; direct AC lighting

straight-cut gears; 2.864:1 ratio
wet, multi-plate
#520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.692:1 (48/13) ratio

Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
2.769	29.279	2.63
2.000	21.148	3.64
1.533	16.210	4.75
1.235	13.059	5.90
1.042	11.018	6.99
0.870	9.199	8.37

Kayaba air-spring, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/10.0 in. (253mm)

single Kayaba shock, 4-position adjustable rebound damping, 25mm spring preload range/10.9 in. (278mm)

drum, single-leading shoe

drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

3.00-21 Dunlop Sports K790
4.00-18 Dunlop Sports K790

214 lbs. (97.1kg)
47.2% front, 52.8% rear
56.9 to 58.2 in. (1446 to 1479mm)
36.3 in. (922mm)
32.5 in. (825mm)
15.5 in. (394mm)
12.2 in. (310mm), at frame crossmember
28.0 degrees from vertical
4.76 in. (121mm)
tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube

plastic, 2.8 gal. (10.6 /), including 0.3 gal. (1.1/)
LCD tripmeter resettable in hundredths, LCD elapsed timer resettable to zero

79 mph (127 km/h)

90 days

Sunbeam Red; Lime Green

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$1749

two-stroke vertical single

one reed-valve-controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one exhaust

66.0mm x 57.0mm
195.0cc
8.4:1 (corrected)
one 34mm Mikuni slide/needle
two-stage washable oiled foam element
pre-mixed fuel and oil
primary kick
external-rotor magneto CDI
none; direct AC lighting

straight-cut; 2.900:1 ratio
wet, multi-plate
#520 chain (⅝-in. pitch, ¼-in. width); 3.667:1 (44/12) ratio

Internal gear ratio	Overall gear ratio	MPH per 1000 RPM
2.750	29.244	2.63
1.857	19.748	3.89
1.500	15.951	4.82
1.250	13.293	5.79
1.080	11.485	6.70
0.875	9.305	8.27

Kayaba air-spring, 43mm stanchion tube diameter, compression damping blowoff valve infinitely variable within 12 turns of adjusting screw/10.0 in. (254mm)
single Yamaha shock, 34-position adjustable compression damping, 34-position adjustable rebound damping, 17mm spring preload range/10.6 in. (268mm)

drum, single-leading shoe

drum, single-leading shoe, rod-operated

90/90-21 54M IRC Motocross Z-Mark III
120/80-18 65M IRC Motocross Z-Mark II

211 lbs. (95.5kg)
47.0% front, 53.0% rear
56.8 to 57.9 in. (1443 to 1470mm)
36.7 in. (932mm)
32.1 in. (815mm)
16.4 in. (416mm)
13.5 in. (342mm), at engine cradle
28.0 degrees from vertical
4.53 in. (115mm)
tubular chromoly steel, single front downtube

plastic, 3.3 gal. (12.5/), including 0.5 gal. (2.0/) reserve
tripmeter resettable in tenths

78 mph (126 km/h)

90 days

blue only

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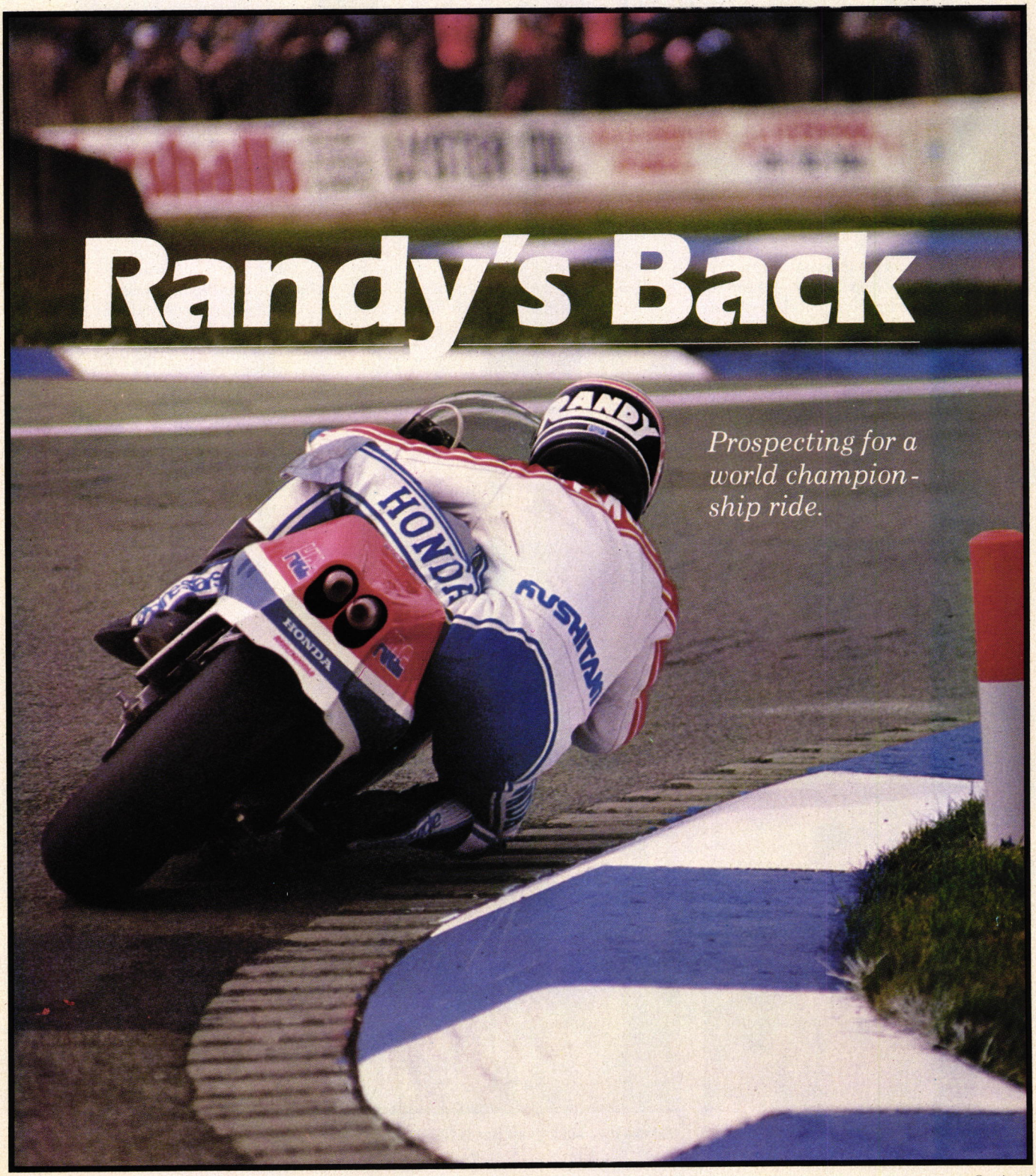
SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

Randy's Back

Prospecting for a world championship ride.



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PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 MIKE PONS

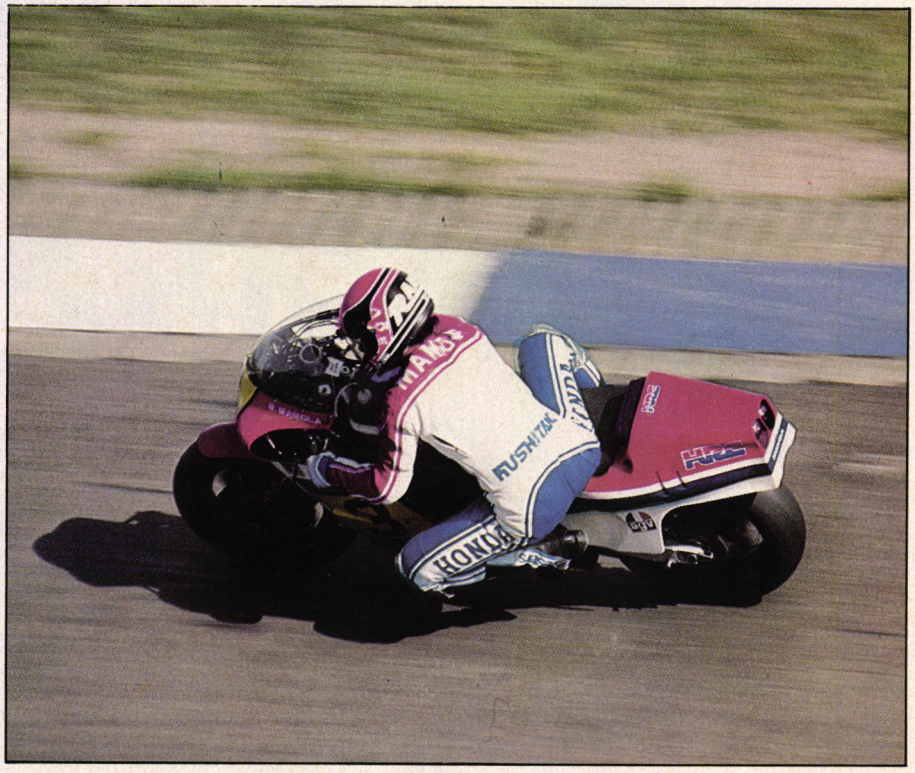
• Randy Mamola spent most of the 1983 GP roadracing season in the shadow of Freddie Spencer and Kenny Roberts. Their bikes were noticeably faster than his Suzuki Gamma II, which left Mamola to scrape and scratch for a slot in victory circle at every GP, while Roberts and Spencer duked it out for the win. To get that spot in victory circle, Mamola said he spent most of his time "riding my butt off." And despite such heroic efforts, he ended the year third in the point standings, with no desire to race the same bike for 1984.

So when Suzuki said it wasn't going to develop the square-four further, or even provide him with a new bike for the 1984 GP wars, Mamola and his business manager, Jim Doyle, decided to sit out this year and wait for either Suzuki or another team to offer them a ride for 1985. For the first time since he was in grade school, Mamola was having to endure a racing season as a spectator. At Daytona for Cycle Week, he spent most of his time "just hanging around," as he put it, watching Roberts and Spencer continue their on-track feud.

"Hanging around" wasn't enough to keep him in the limelight, though, and once the GP season got underway, the moto-press suddenly forgot about Randy Mamola, the racer. After all, there's little that's newsworthy about a racer—even if he's ranked number three in the world—who doesn't have a ride. "I noticed that Randy wasn't getting any ink once the 1984 season got started," Doyle said. "So I told Randy that if we go through 12 months of nothing, I'm going to have a hard time telling the factories that he deserves a ride."

Jim Doyle talks tactics

Putting the money on the line.



Mamola tried out his new Honda NS500 at the Match Races

Last year's bike was good for three of the six wins.

The English opposition fought hard

But couldn't keep both tires down.

So they decided to go racing this year, and the first order of business was to find a bike. Honda obliged by selling Mamola a 1983 ex-factory NS500. A deal was cut, and Mamola wasted little time prepping his new racer for the 14th edition of the annual Anglo-American Match Race Series in England over Easter weekend.

Mamola showed no signs of being rusty, either, winning three of the six races at the Donington Park track. After leading the U.S. team to victory, Honda's unofficial support rider packed up and, with former Suzuki mechanics Mike Sinclair and Thierry Gerin doing the tuning, joined the GP circus at Madrid for the Spanish Grand Prix, the third race of the season.

"It was nice," Randy said about his return to GP racing. "People were coming up to me and shaking my hand and welcoming me back." As for the race, Mamola was ready to tangle with the factory Hondas and Yamahas—again. And like last year, his bike was under-powered and overweight

The return included more than just racing

"People were welcoming me back."

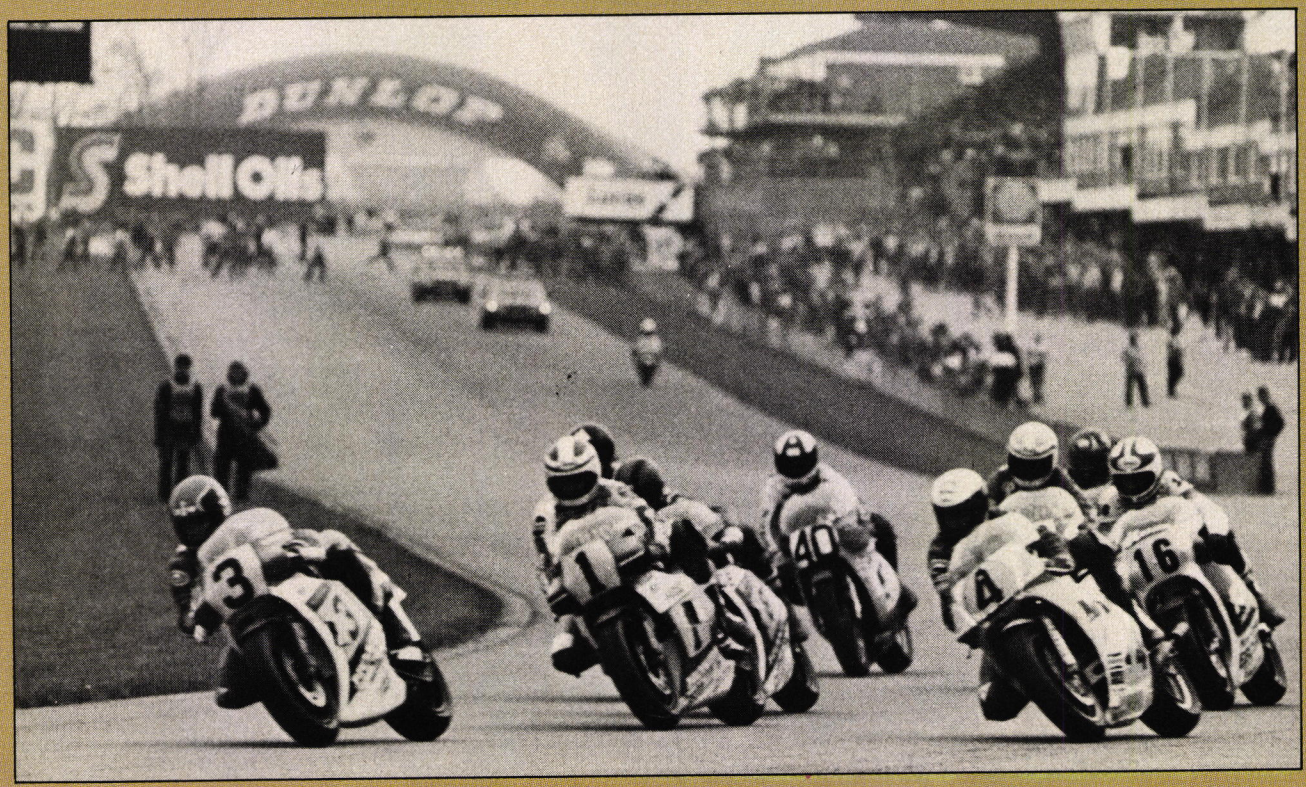
Mamola's Match

• Randy Mamola had two things in his favor going into the Transatlantic Match Races this year: He held the track record at Donington Park, where all six races were to be held, and he was hungry for a win. And it was that hunger that gave him the best advantage for the annual matchup between the American and Commonwealth teams.

He started by winning the first two races, first beating British team star Ron Haslam, then World Champion Freddie Spencer. Spencer won the next two rounds, and Mamola won the fifth race. Kenny Roberts finally broke the Honda grip, taking the final race of the series.

Mamola's superb riding in the six-race series gave him the individual championship, with 67 points. Eddie Lawson was next with a 62-point total, while Roberts and Spencer tallied 53 and 52 respectively. The final standings were 256 to 139 in favor of the U.S. team. Never before had the American team beaten its hosts so soundly.

It was a spectacular victory for the Americans, but it meant even more to Mamola. By leading all the other riders in points at the Match Races, he proved to himself, his peers and to the manufacturers that he was still a force to be reckoned with despite a near seven-month hiatus. *—Dain Gingerelli*



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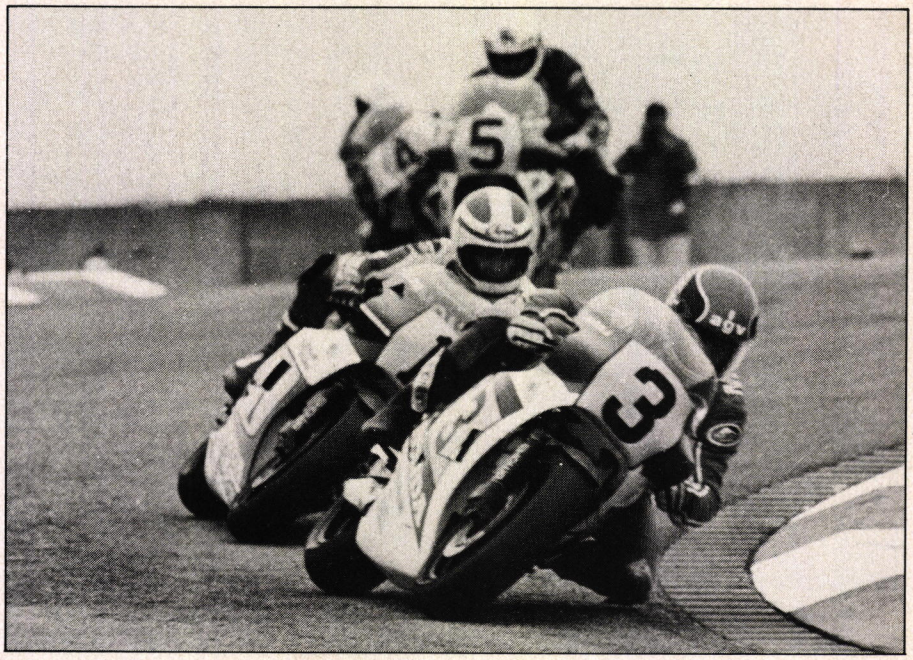
compared to the factory racers. Mamola figured his only hope was for it to rain on race day. A wet track, he said, would nullify the horsepower and weight advantages of the factory bikes. Unfortunately for him, the Spanish GP was run in the dry. He finished second to Yamaha's Eddie Lawson, who apparently had an easy time of it, because Freddie Spencer missed the race to give his broken foot time to heal.

But even with Spencer out, Mamola had to ride every bit as hard as he did last year. This time, though, he was motivated by more than just the challenge of finishing in the top three on a barely competitive motorcycle. Mamola's a privateer now, and he has to place well at every race to earn a living. There are no factory paychecks waiting for him at the end of the month.

That's the major difference between Mamola's participation this year and last; this year, he pays the bills. And after spending years as a factory rider, it's quite a bit different on the other side of the fence. "It's kind of tough coming in as a privateer," Doyle said. Further complicating matters was the fact that Mamola had no sponsors lined up before the season got underway. Consequently, most of the sponsorship money in Europe already had been pledged to other racers. "I can't find a European sponsor for our team," said Doyle. Right now their support comes from AGV Helmets, Michelin and Champion Spark Plugs; "and that's it," Doyle said.



The racing community knew Mamola was back when he led World Champion Freddie Spencer

When three will get you four.

But Mamola says he will race as long as the money holds out. He and Doyle have written off 1984 as an investment year. The big payoff, they think, will be 1985, when they can land a large sponsor. "I've already got some commitments for next season," said Doyle. Until then, however, Mamola will have to do what he did so well last season: ride his butt off, and practically perform magic just to get into victory circle.

—Dain Gingerelli

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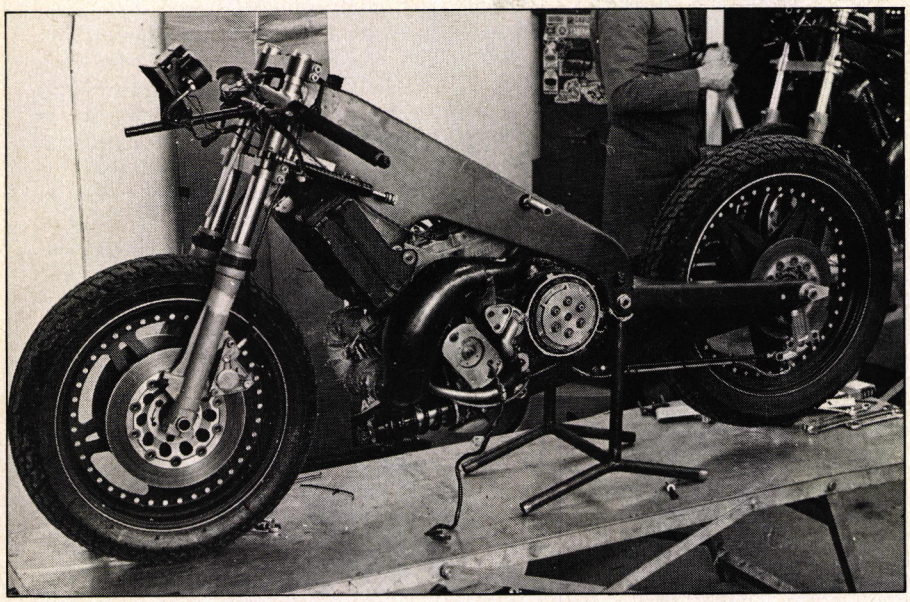
Armstrong 500

Carbon-tech and the flyweight GP bike.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

The 198-pound carbon-fiber racer from Armstrong

Weight matters just as much as horsepower for winning races.

• Despite what you might think, there's nothing really new about carbon-fiber. It's been used in jet fighters, F1 racecars and in parts of racing motorcycles for years. But until now, no motorcycle manufacturer has fully utilized carbon-fiber's combined virtues of light weight and immense strength.

That's all changed, however, through the efforts of designer Mike Eatough and Armstrong Motor Cycles of England. With help from the British aerospace industry, Armstrong has developed the first racing motorcycle—a 250cc GP bike—to be made almost entirely from carbon-fiber. The finished frame weighs an incredible 6.5 pounds, and computer modeling has shown the new design to be considerably stronger than Armstrong's previous steel frame, while weighing less than half as much. In fact, it took the addition of carefully positioned lead ballast to bring Armstrong's 250 up to the FIM class minimum weight limit of 198 lbs.

One of the biggest problems Armstrong faced during the 250's development had nothing to do with carbon-fiber itself. Instead, Armstrong had trouble finding tires that would work on such a light machine; not even Michelin rain tires got up to working temperature on a warm day. But while Armstrong's designers wait for special tires

Continued

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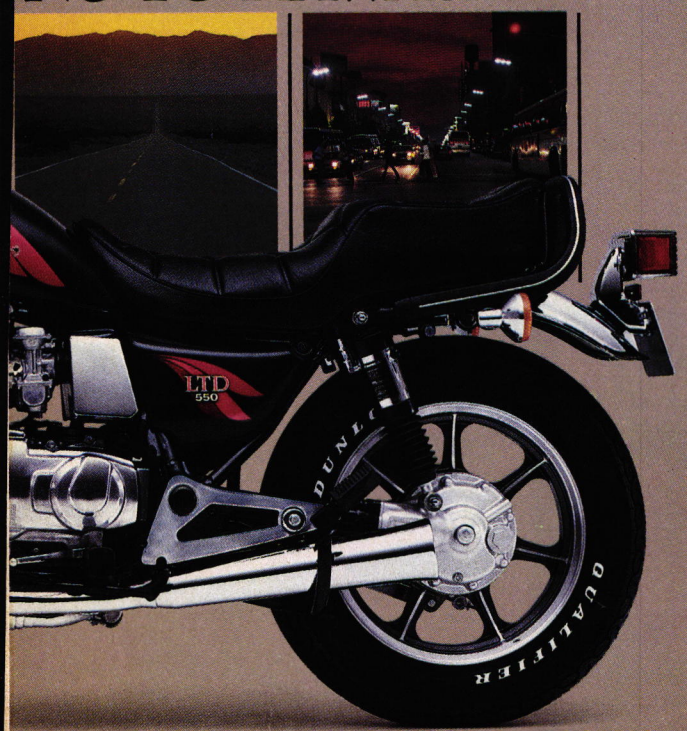

saki's 12 month/unlimited mileage limited warranty may be extended up to three years on major components with the Kawasaki Backup System. See your dealer for details.

ROADRACING:

to be built, they are finishing what could be an even bigger sensation: an all-new 500cc racer that weighs little more than the 250.

The 500 uses a strengthened, 8.5-pound version of the 250's frame, and Armstrong began track-testing the new bike in April. Most details have been kept secret, but it is known that then 500 motor is a liquid-cooled transverse-triple two-stroke. The cylinders are "reversed," with Mikuni carbs feeding reed valves at the front, while the exhaust gets a straight shot out at the rear.

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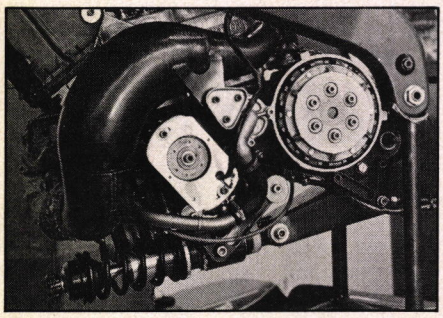
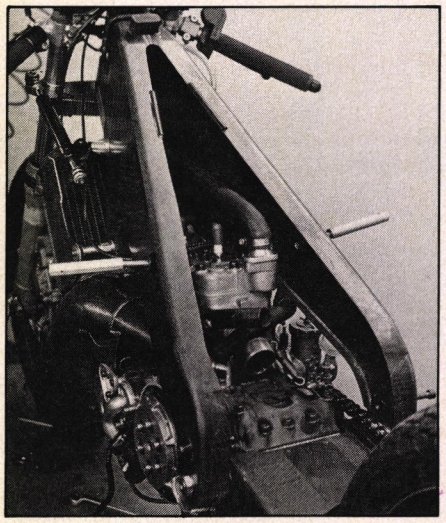


Shock position lowers center of gravity

Simplicity in technology.



But if an inline-triple sounds a little bulky by modern standards, think again. Engine designer Barry Hart claims the Armstrong is 0.5-inch narrower than a Honda RS500 vee-three. This, he said, was accomplished by mounting the electrics on a jackshaft behind the crank instead of on the crankshaft's end.

Hart also claims that tests on Armstrong's dynamometer have shown the new triple makes 10 percent more power than an RS500 Honda. That sort of power advantage, combined with 500 GP racing's lightest chassis, could make Armstrong's contender an instant winner. If that should happen, you can bet other manufacturers will jump to produce carbon copies of the Armstrong. And tubular steel chassis for racebikes could well become museum pieces in the forseeable future. —*David Dewhurst*

SUPERCROSS

Canadian Hockeycross

Good Supercrosses come in small packages.

• Americans tend to be terribly smug about Supercross racing, and for good reason. It's a distinctly American sport, invented and dominated by Americans. In fact, with events in Italy, Japan, Australia and a number of other nations, Supercross ranks as this country's number one motosport export.

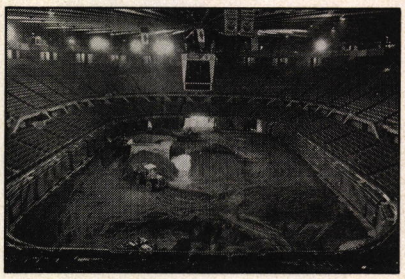
Like any other commodity, though, Supercross stands the risk not only of being copied, but modified and perhaps even improved upon, as well. Take, for example, the Labatt's Wild Rose Invitational Series in Alberta, Canada, last February. The four races of the series were, without doubt, Supercrosses—motocross races held on man-made courses in stadiums. But Brimstone Productions, promoter of the series, provided a distinctly Canadian touch: The four races were run in hockey rinks.

Brimstone views Hockeycross as a practical modification of the American import. The Yankee brand of Supercross requires big stadiums, big money and big crowds, whereas Canada, and many areas of the United States as well, can't guarantee any of those. But hockey stadiums can be rented for a fraction of the cost of something like the Astrodome or Anaheim Stadium, and their smaller scale means that track construction requires less work, less dirt and less money. As a result, the promoter's ante for each event is less, so the races can be held more frequently. In short, Brimstone believes Supercross has to shrink before it can grow.

In most other repects, though, the Labatt's events were full-on U.S.-style stadium races. Brimstone even imported American race announcer Larry Huffman, an American sanctioning body (the Continental Motosport Club), and American track-builder Ron Crandall. Crandall had his work cut out for him, too, in trying to fit the tracks within the small stadiums at Edmonton and Calgary. But Brimstone made his task a little easier by electing to to run 125cc bikes instead of the 250s used in American Supercross. The smaller, more agile 125s are better suited for the tight confines of Hockeycross.

Brimstone had some other problems with the inaugural series; not so much with the concept, but in attracting big-name riders willing to try something different. The races were run entirely with privateers, but the Canadian spectators didn't seem to mind. The racing went on with Jim Holleys and Russ Wagemans replacing the Bob Hannahs and David Baileys. Nonetheless, the four events were considered successes, even with crowds as small as 6000 spectators at one event. In fact, the series was successful enough for Brimstone to plan similar events for this summer in Alberta, and after that—Hawaii. So in the very near future, Hockeycross might just become America's leading motosport *import*.

—*Ron Lawson*

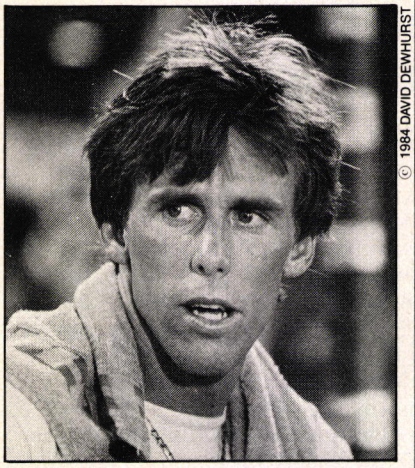


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 RON LAWSON

Canadians found that Supercross had to get smaller before it could grow

Smaller bikes, smaller tracks and smaller races have a big future.

Pit Bits



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Bob Hannah after the storm

Weathering another year of racing.

• Hannah over: For a motocross racer, Bob Hannah is getting on in years. He is, after all, 27, and beginning to show his age. Apparently, though, with the years comes a dollop of humility. More than once this year he's admitted before a race that he had only a slight chance of winning against some of the younger riders. But at the Pontiac Silverdome in Michigan, the Hurricane Hannah that everyone knew in the Seventies was in full force, and he won the Supercross Main, making it pro-win number 68 for the old boy. After the race, he said, "I had to show those young guys I'm still good for a win now and then."

• It's in the jeans: Wrangler Wear, primary sponsor of the InSport Wrangler Supercross Series, has upped the championship point fund for the year to $125,000. The series winner will receive a cool forty grand from Wrangler, while the runner-up gets $20,000. Last year's point fund was only $30,000. As Wrangler's Director of Special Events put it, "We are trying to let everyone know that Wrangler Jeans and Supercross make a fine combination." That kind of money could make any motocross racer happy about getting into Wrangler's pants.

• Long green: Wrangler isn't the only company posting large contingencies for motorcycle racing this year. Kawasaki Motors Corp. U.S.A. is offering a bagful of money for 1984, too. Kawasaki has put up $24,000 worth of contingencies to qualified class winners riding Kawasaki bikes in American Federation of Motorcyclist club-level roadraces. Another $10,400 is earmarked for the Western-Eastern Racing Association's Grand National Finals, to be held at Road Atlanta, November 8-11.

• Greenlight money: Kawasaki hasn't opened the till just to closed-circuit rac-

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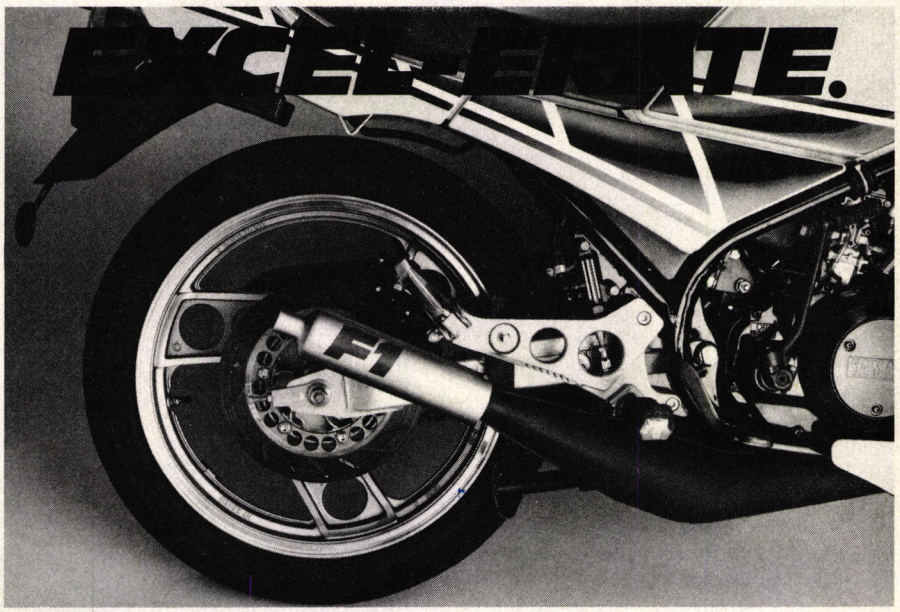

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Pit Bits

ing, though. Several dragracing organizations also are included in the company's contingency program, including $17,400 for International Drag Bike Association (IDBA) event winners, and $26,850 available to class winners on Kawasaki bikes in National Motorcycle Racing Association (NMRA) races.

• Free Ninja: Hot Bike Engineering, of Fremont, California, isn't giving away money, but the company is offering a worthwhile prize to a Kawasaki rider. The first dragracer to run a Ninja quicker than 9.99 seconds in the quarter-mile in one of three classes—ProStock, Super-Stock or Modified—will receive a Kawasaki Ninja. The only other stipulations are that the motorcycle must be equipped with a Hot Bike Engineering Cobra exhaust system, and the run must be made at an AMA/DRAGBIKE, IDBA or NMRA meet.

• Shobert shines: Honda flattrack racer Bubba Shobert had a profitable weekend at the May 5-6 San Jose National. Shobert began the weekend with a win in the Shorttrack National on Saturday evening, then returned the following day to win the Mile. Shobert's double puts him in exclusive company, too. He joins Joe Leonard and Steve Eklund as the only riders in AMA Grand National history to win two races at the same track on the same weekend. Leonard won a pair of TTs at Peoria in 1954, and Eklund scored his double at the Houston Astrodome in 1978.

• Goss' loss: While Shobert had things pretty much his way at San Jose, Harley-Davidson team rider Randy Goss ended a streak at the Mile. His San Jose Mile ended in a DNF, the first for him in 33 races. Goss later picked up where he left off by placing fifth the following weekend at the Ascot Half-Mile.

• Roberts goes four-wheeling: While three-time world champ Kenny Roberts still is undecided about his motorcycle racing career, another professional avenue has opened to him: car racing. Roberts apparently had a try-out for the Ford roadrace team just before Daytona this year, with fair success. According to Ford spokesman Bill Peacock, the company's race administrators consider Roberts as one of the top candidates for Ford's Mustang GTP endurance team.

• Heel to toe: Although Roberts' lap times at Laguna Seca in the Ford Mustang were impressive, he had difficulty with the heel/toe procedure necessary for braking and shifting a racecar. Yamaha race director Ken Clark jokingly said, "Kenny's just a gas-it-and-steer driver anyway." —*Dain Gingerelli*

Winners & Losers

Prophet Parker

Scott Parker performs a miracle, and turns a red flag into a checkered flag.

© 1984 PATRICK BEHAR

Scott Parker: no predictions

The race isn't over 'til it's over.

• Ever since the beginning of dirt, Harley-Davidson race bikes have been the masters of AMA Class C flattrack racing. Harleys, in either factory team guise or flying privateer's colors, have won 23 of the 29 AMA Grand National Championships. The results are almost enough to make you believe that God does, indeed, ride a Harley.

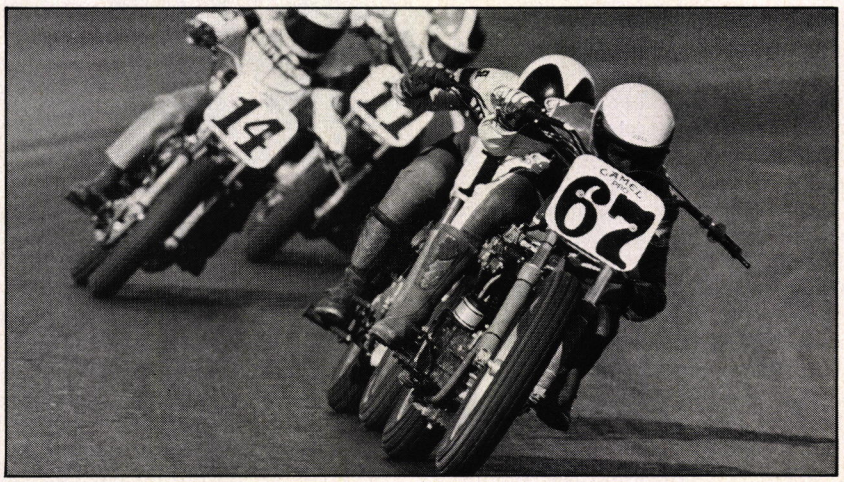
But if He does ride, it seems He's switched mounts for 1984—to a Honda. And He's got it running pretty fast, too; fast enough to win four of the five California dirttrack races that traditionally kick off the summer session of Half-Miles and Miles—what some people consider the *real racing* of the 34-race Camel Pro Series schedule.

Honda's dominance of the California swing was so thorough that when Harley team rider Scott Parker qualified fastest for the Ascot Half-Mile, the final race of the spring series, he was reluctant to predict a win. Instead, during a short homily he told a partisan crowd of Harleyphiles, "We're gonna work on beating these Hondas."

His sermon drew a brisk round of applause from the Harleyites. Parker did his part in the holy war, too, by beating the Hondas in his heat, and edging Honda team rider Bubba Shobert in the process. The earth didn't quake, but the crowd certainly did. Maybe God was on Harley's side after all.

Parker's grandstand following began to sense victory, too; it would be the first win for a Harley since the season opener at Houston. As the Main drew near, confidence grew in the Harley camp. Maybe Parker and teammate Randy Goss really would beat the Honda horde, consisting of Shobert, second-heat-winner Ricky Graham and Doug Chandler. Still, H-D was short one rider; Jay Springsteen had to sit-out Ascot because his on-again/off-again illness struck again, as it had the week before at San Jose. Team Harley-Davidson was not only the underdog that night, but it's riders were outnumbered, three to two.

And by lap 18 of the Main, it appeared as if the bid for a Harley upset-win was finished. Goss started poorly and was busy trying to salvage a decent finish.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1984 DAVID DEWHURST

Bubba Shobert had a perfect weekend at San Jose last May

The leader of the pack rode a Honda vee-twin.

Parker was alone up front with the trio of Hondas; Graham had a solid lead, while Shobert and Chandler were busy dodging chunks of clay kicked up by Parker's XR750. The two Honda riders were too far back to pass, but ready to take advantage if Parker fumbled.

But three laps from the end, just when it seemed all over, the tide turned in Harley's favor. Garth Brow, riding Mert Lawwill's new aluminum-frame XR750, crashed hard in Turn Two and the race was red-flagged. Brow was unhurt, but his deed drew a round of cheers from the Harleyites. When it was announced that the race would be restarted, the feeling was that Brow had thrown himself on the grenade, saving H-D from almost certain defeat. Parker had a second chance, since the riders would be restarted nose-to-tail according to their positions on the previous lap, number 17. And Parker rose to the occasion: He got the holeshot on Graham at the restart, and three laps later took the checkered flag by a wheel.

Graham, understandably, was not too happy about the turn of events. He had asked the track officials to call the race after the red flag; according to AMA rules, a race that's run 60 percent of its distance can be ruled complete under such conditions.

The restart cost Honda more than first place, too. Shobert was caught nap-

Randy Goss and Harley have The Plate

And Honda wants it—badly.

A line of Harleyites at San Jose

Intermixed with three Hondas.

Continued

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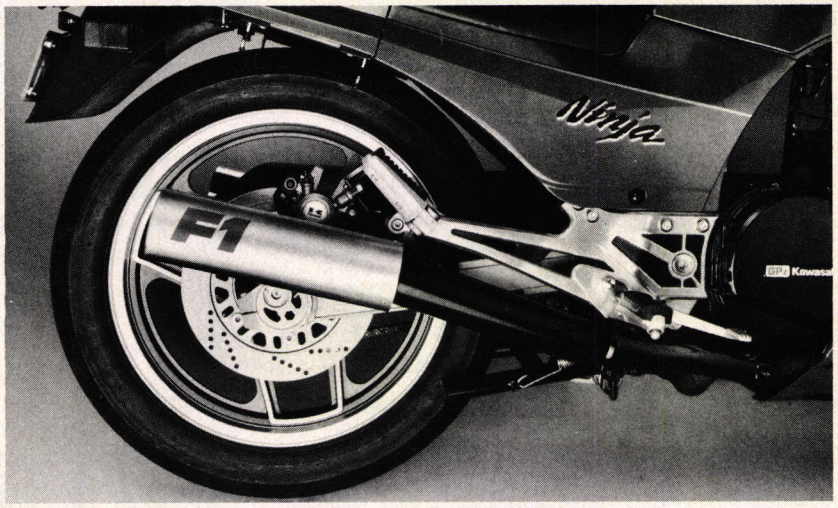

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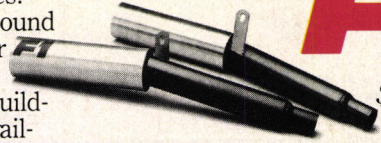

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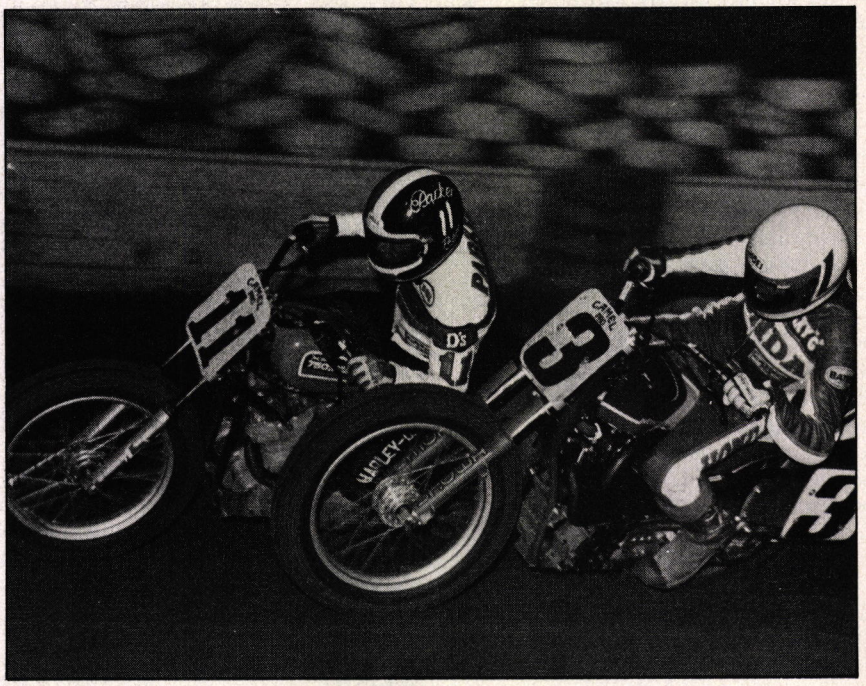
Winners & Losers

ping at the restart, and finished 11th, while privateer-H-D-mounted Steve Moorehead caught and passed Chandler for third. What had looked like a certain Honda/H-D/Honda finish was reversed in the final standings, with Harleys in first and third. "When Parker picked off one Honda (Graham's), I figured I could pick off the other, " said an elated, but somewhat bitter, Moorehead after the race. Like Graham, he also was upset with the handling of the race, though for a different reason: Moorehead was angry that anyone would consider halting the race prematurely. "These people pay good money to watch a race," he said, "so let's give 'em a good show."

Regardless of whether or not the riders agreed with Moorehead's thinking, nearly everyone in the Ascot stands wanted the Harleys to beat the Hondas, even if it took a red flag to get to the checkered first. Perhaps Parker summed it up best when he crowed in victory circle, "We beat 'em on a Harley-Davidson." Order was restored, at least temporarily, to Class-C racing.

—Dain Gingerelli •



A red flag was all that stopped Ricky Graham from winning Ascot

And a Harley-Davidson XR750 with Scott Parker aboard.

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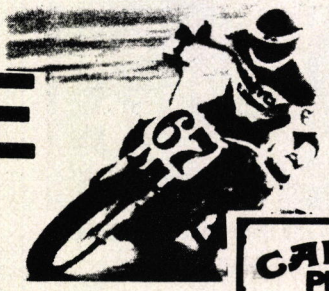

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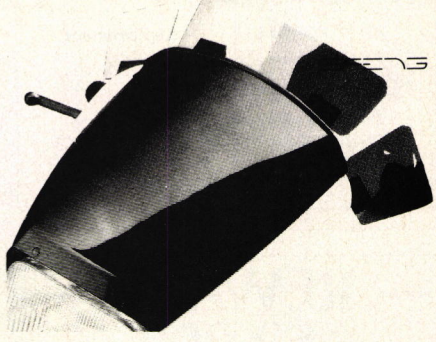

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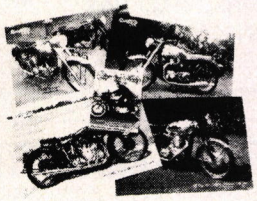
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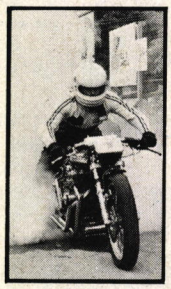

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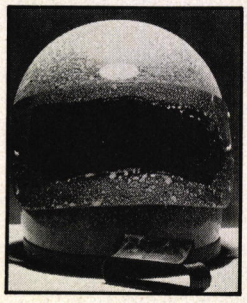

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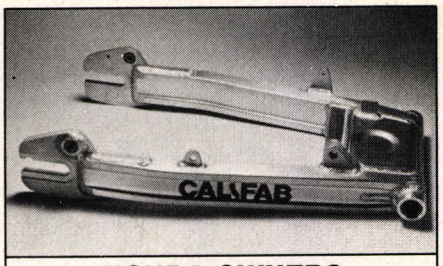

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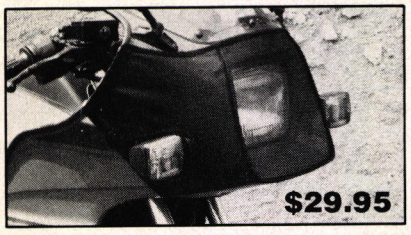

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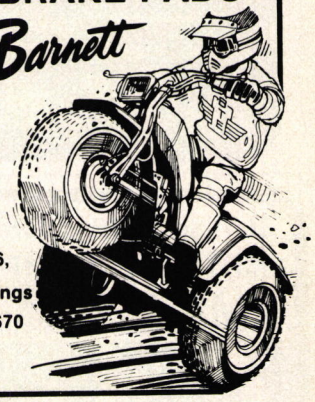

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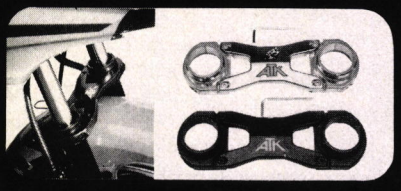

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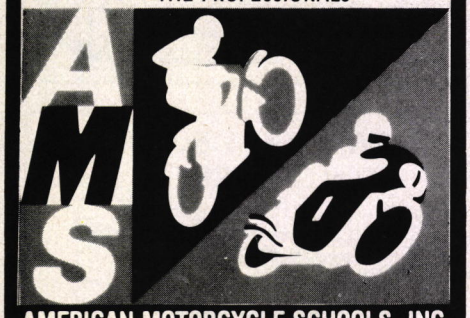

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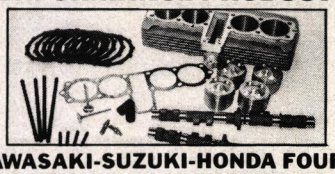

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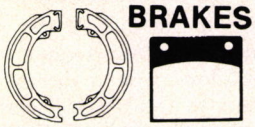

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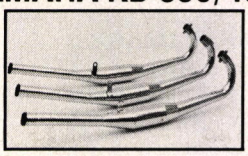

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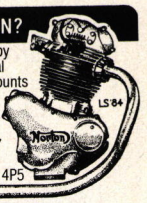

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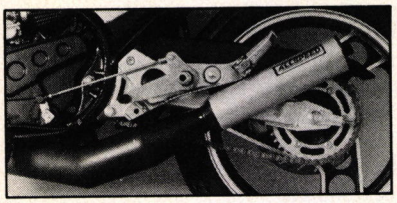

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SILVER DREAM RACER

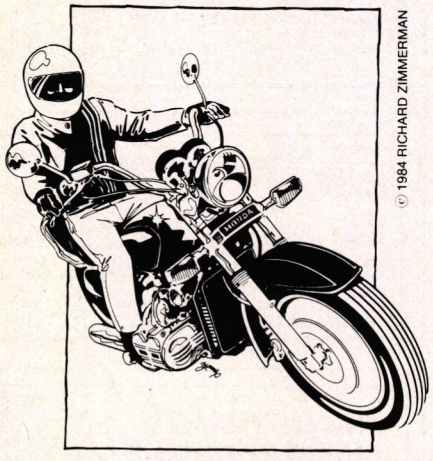
I ride a Kawasaki 1983 GPz550. I read your GPz/Interceptor comparison, and let me tell you something—the 500 Interceptor is not all that fast. I personally outran the 650 Nighthawk and V45 Magna; the only bikes I cannot compete with are the 1100s. I don't know what you have against the Kawasaki, but I do not appreciate the way you put it down. In one of your issues, you said the 500 Interceptor ran 127 mph, that's two miles per hour faster than the 1984 GPz550. I have had my bike up to 135 mph. I eventually want to roadrace for Team Green, so I can prove Hondas aren't what people think they are.

Ray A. Daugherty
Alamagordo, New Mexico

Try running against timing lights or a radar gun, not speedometer error and a vivid imagination—ed.

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPS

In reference to your "Speed Wars II: The Sequel" (June 1984), it's not that I'm a bad loser (I ride a GS), but I think the GS1150ES can still surpass the FJ1100 in the quarter-mile. Different tracks give different times, and Gleason did a 10.47-second, 128.02-mph pass on the GS1150 at Fremont. Also, I'd like to say that just because the GS can't go 146 mph, that doesn't mean the bike isn't worth riding. I think 142 mph is more than acceptable. The incredible low-end power of the GS is worth the expense of



four mph on top-end. I loved the speed article, but let Gleason take the top two quarter-milers to Fremont for the championship.

Tony Mazurek
Toledo, Ohio

Gleason already has: The FJ1100 turned a 10.43/128.93 at Fremont, which still puts the GS1150ES in second—ed.

REVERSED IMAGES

Almost every road test I've read on the GPzs has faulted their mirrors. In your May comparison with the Interceptors, I noticed that almost every picture shows the Interceptors without (I hate the word sans) mirrors. What gives? Could they have made a difference of 0.02 seconds in the quarter-mile, or caused speed wobbles, or maybe meant the difference between first and second place in your comparison?

J. Ward McKee
Long Beach, California

We remove handlebar-mounted mirrors at the racetrack as a safety precaution. As for the test, mirrors reverse images, not test results—ed.

SPEED READING

What's going on here? Are you guys trying to convince us that we should be riding our bikes through outer space at supersonic speeds? I just finished reading your June issue, and I'm concerned that I might not be able to ride my Shadow 750 at less than 100 mph. It seems this speed affliction has developed over the last few issues. How about coming back down to planet earth? This fastest game can never be settled anyway. I do admit that I enjoy the articles on the new quick bikes, but I think a balance is needed. Don't let an entire issue leave the reader with a preoccupation with speed. For me, I'd like to go through it all: fast, slow, and everything in between.

Ron Schroeder
Grand Rapids, Michigan

So do we. Can we interest you in a couple of trials bikes?—ed.

FASTER OR QUICKER

I have just finished reading "Speed Wars II: The Sequel" and the graph of quarter-mile times puzzles me. How can a bike have the lowest elapsed time, but yet not have the highest top speed? I have noticed similar data in other motorcycle tests. Would you please explain this phenomenon?

Michael A. Ryan
Salisbury, North Carolina

Sure. A slower bike can out-E.T. a faster bike if it gets up to speed more quickly—ed.

DISEASED READERS?

The comments of Messrs. Gary, Lindquist and DeBourbon in your June 1984 issue prompted me to drop you a line. In my 15 years of riding, I have been blessed with a circle of friends who ride different brands of motorcycles on the street and in the dirt. These same friends have taught me a valuable lesson: Brand loyalty is a disease that blinds riders to the relative merits of other brands and to technological developments that can enhance the enjoyment of motorcycling. Your road tests are unbiased, fair and more important, relevant. My advice to any rider is to read the test, then test ride the motorcycle for the type of riding you do. Find the best price, find out which dealer gives the best service and then buy the bike, and to hell with what anyone else thinks.

Robin Robertson
Phoenix, Arizona

... OR CONCUSSED?

I can't believe Michael DeBourbon's letter in your June issue, wherein he devised a rating system to "evaluate each machine fairly." If we took a test, and I scored 100 percent, he got 60 percent and two other people received a grade of 40 percent, would his rating system have me ahead "by a wide margin" or would we be neck and neck? If he lost a dragrace to a Canadian rider, would he tell his friends that he lost, or that he came in second in an international race? I think DeBourbon is the one who's been "bashing into the pavement"—with his head. You shouldn't have given him the courtesy of printing that stupid letter.

Pat Maturo
Orange, Connecticut

UNBIASED OPINION?

I have to comment on all the letters you've been receiving accusing you of being too much in favor of Honda motorcycles. I am a devoted Honda fan, and it makes me happy to see Honda putting so much pressure on the other manufacturers to build better bikes. New technology enhances the sport, so let's give Honda its just rewards. As far as I'm concerned, it's about time. What does it matter if Honda outspends its competition, as long as it benefits the sport? Let those fools out there gripe all they

LETTERS

want. Honda is here to stay, and the more pressure it puts on the competition, the better off we all are.

G.D. Rowe
Columbus, Ohio

MORE THAN THE STYLE

I have held back for three years regarding the remarks about Japanese motorcycles copying Harley-Davidson's styling, but with Jim Lorraine's comments in your April 1984 issue I have had enough. Yamaha might have borrowed the style from H-D, but that's where they stopped—thank God. The Virago has so many advantages over a Sportster that anyone serious about riding motorcycles and not wrenching on them would not worry about a slight styling difference. The Virago's vee-twin is virtually maintenance-free, it doesn't leak oil, vibrate or break down every other week. It's shaft-drive is smooth, quiet, clean and also maintenance-free. The suspension system gives you a much smoother and more comfortable ride than a Harley's does. All this and more at one-third the Harley's price.

I have nothing against H-D. If it could borrow Yamaha's technology and build a reliable bike at a decent price, I would be the first in line for the American-made bike. But until then, I will just keep riding my Virago.

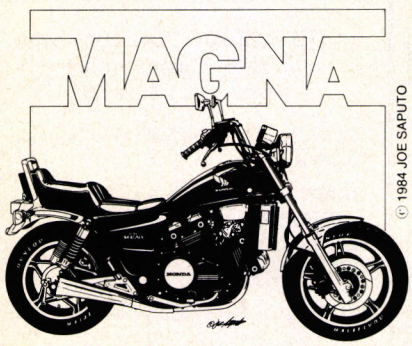
Doug Bongle
Kewaunee, Wisconsin

BEATING A DEAD HORSE

I own a 1983 Yamaha Venture, and after riding it to California pulling a trailer, and then riding the new Aspencade on short trips, I have to say that Honda must have paid you people well for the touring comparison in the March 1984 issue. I really laughed when you placed the Aspencade first, ahead of the Venture.

Kaye P. Havner
Grant City, Missouri

But we didn't ride the Aspencade only on "short trips." We toured it—ed.



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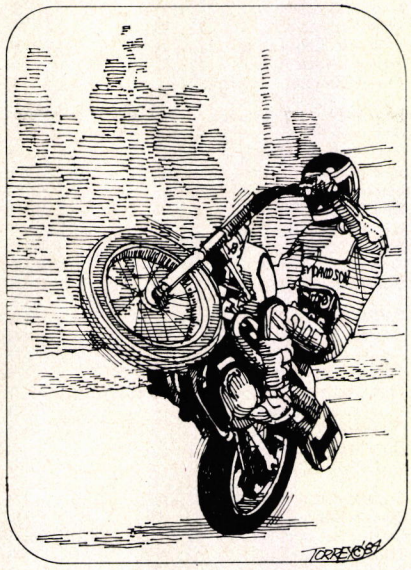

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CHAMPING AT THE BIT

Received my April 1984 issue of Cycle Guide and did my usual fast flash to the Rumors column. It seems this column always gets my attention because of the talk of the coming model year, and the April column really has my adrenaline flowing. If what you say develops for the '85 Wing, it looks like it will be another big Wing year. I noticed, however, that you mentioned fuel-injection for the new engine. That's a prediction you also made for the '84 model, but maybe Honda will do it this time.

Dave Lawson
Noblesville, Indiana

SHIFTLESS RIDERS

I ride a CB750 Automatic, and being 65 years old, I love not having to shift. I learned to ride about three years ago on a CB400 Automatic, and have never ridden any other type of bike. But this past year I have been looking at an Aspencade, and the only thing that has stopped me from getting one is the shift. Now I read in your Rumors column about the bike I've only been able to dream about: the Gold Wing/Aspencade Automatic. As soon as this bike hits the market, I'll own one. I can now make it through the year with my 1978 CB750A and feel good about waiting for the GL Automatic.

Wylie Neal
Waxhaw, North Carolina

KAW OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

Since the last of the snow has disappeared and the motorcycles in Saint John have come out of hibernation, I've kept an eye out for recent models. While sitting at a gas station, I drooled over a new Suzuki GS1150 and a Kawasaki Ninja. My shock came when I noticed that the Ninja was beautifully dressed in blue and white. Since it's unlikely that anyone would paint a brand-new bike, I'm sure you know what I'm getting at. Your test of the Ninja (May 1984) states that the bike is available only in red and gray. What's going on here?

Andy Pierce
Saint John, New Brunswick
Canada

The Canadian Ninja can be had in either blue/white or red/gray. Anyway, if we can chrome a new BMW K100, why can't someone paint a new Ninja?—ed.

SUNDAY RIDER

I really enjoyed the article by Steve Thompson, "Sunday Rides" (May 1984). I've often thought that the challenge of of putting my superbike on the track, with no cars or cops, is the ultimate dream. Problems arise, however, because I live in a place where the only paved tracks are dragstrips. This leaves me cruising the backroads at triple-digit speeds, dodging gravel, potholes, sightseeing Sunday drivers and the highway patrol. It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it. I'd hate to waste my Ninja's tires through rot.

Pete Schultz
Bozeman, Montana

NIGHT BLIND

What's going on here? I own a Bell Tourstar helmet with every type of faceshield available, but I have never seen a shield as totally black as the one on the cover of your April 1984 issue. Is this what they mean by driving while blind? I certainly hope David Dewhurst got the hell out of the way after he took the photo.

Vance Deniston
Albuquerque, New Mexico

It's OK, Everitt can only ride that fast with blinders on—ed. •

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret that we are unable to give personal responses.

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. . . beyond form and function.

Experience the eclipse of form and function with the aerodynamics of the Shoei TF-250. It results from untiring endeavors of theory and practice, the analysis of wind tunnel testing and competition, to provide you unsurpassed comfort.

Adjustable air intakes below the face shield direct fresh air through ventilator grooves in the helmet liner, exiting "stuffy" air by way of outlets at the neckline. With fingertip ease the rider can adjust the shield to any of 6-position openings, for even better air flow. A combined ventilation system that virtually eliminates and prevents shield fogging.

The helmet shell is of precision molded fiberglass, making it super-strong yet super-lightweight. Highlighting the helmet is our contoured polycarbonate shield, positioned to a square view port with a seamless-mold rib, providing you excellent peripheral vision and no distortion.

Comfort beyond experience.
The Shoei TF-250.

SHOEI

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THE 1984 NISSAN DIRT TRUCK.

NISSAN 4x4 LONG BED

Before you can bust the dust, you need to get there. Nobody does it better than this tough hunk.

It combines muscular performance with equipment that makes it the perfect vehicle to haul your bikes.

- *Most powerful standard engine in its class plus a 5-speed manual transmission—to get your bikes to the outback, and back.*
- *Nearly 7½ long feet of double-walled cargo bed. Six cleat tie-downs hold bikes from outside the bed.*
- *Tailgate lowers 90,° 180° or comes off for easy bike loading.*
- *Payload of 1,460 pounds, standard. More than Toyota, Chevy S-10 or Ford Ranger.*
- *Oversize fuel tank: 19.8 gallons.*
- *Wide-clearance independent front suspension steps over tough stuff instead of bouncing like live axles.*

Big. Brawny. Built to haul with the quality and economy that have made Nissan-engineered trucks the most popular compact ever. In 4x4 or 4x2, this hunk isn't just a truck. It's Major Motion.

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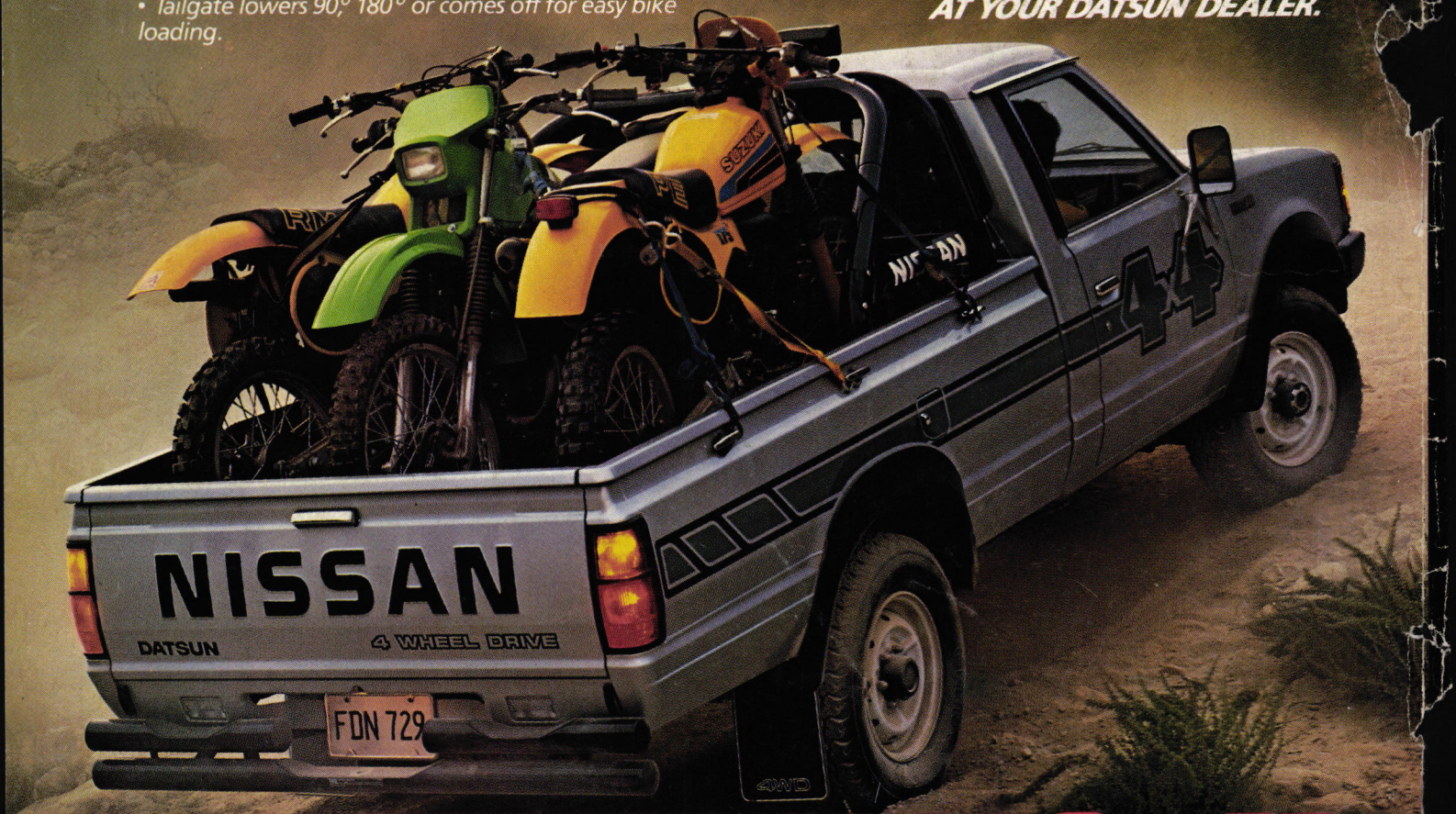

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LONG BED

MAJOR MOTION FROM NISSAN

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